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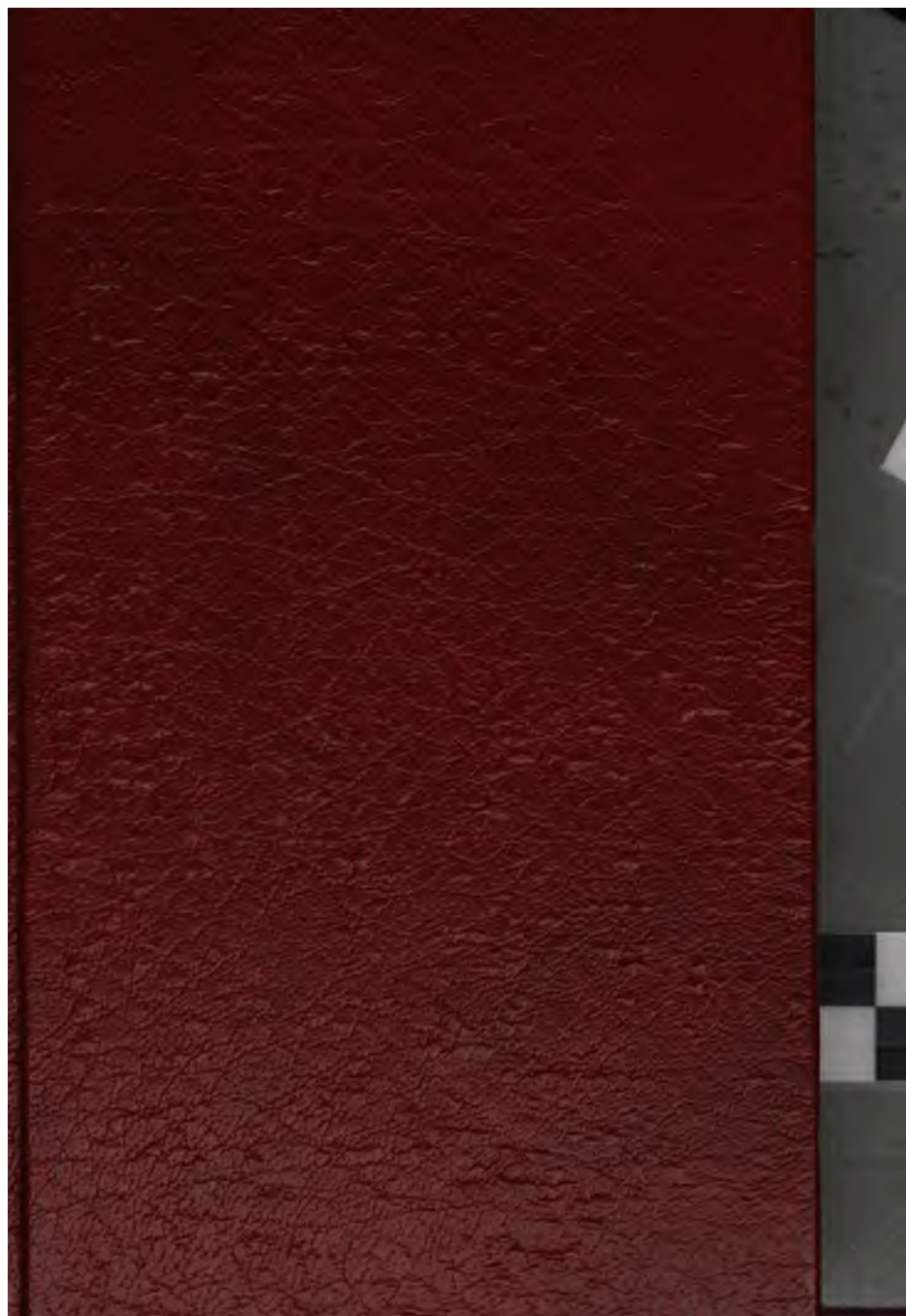
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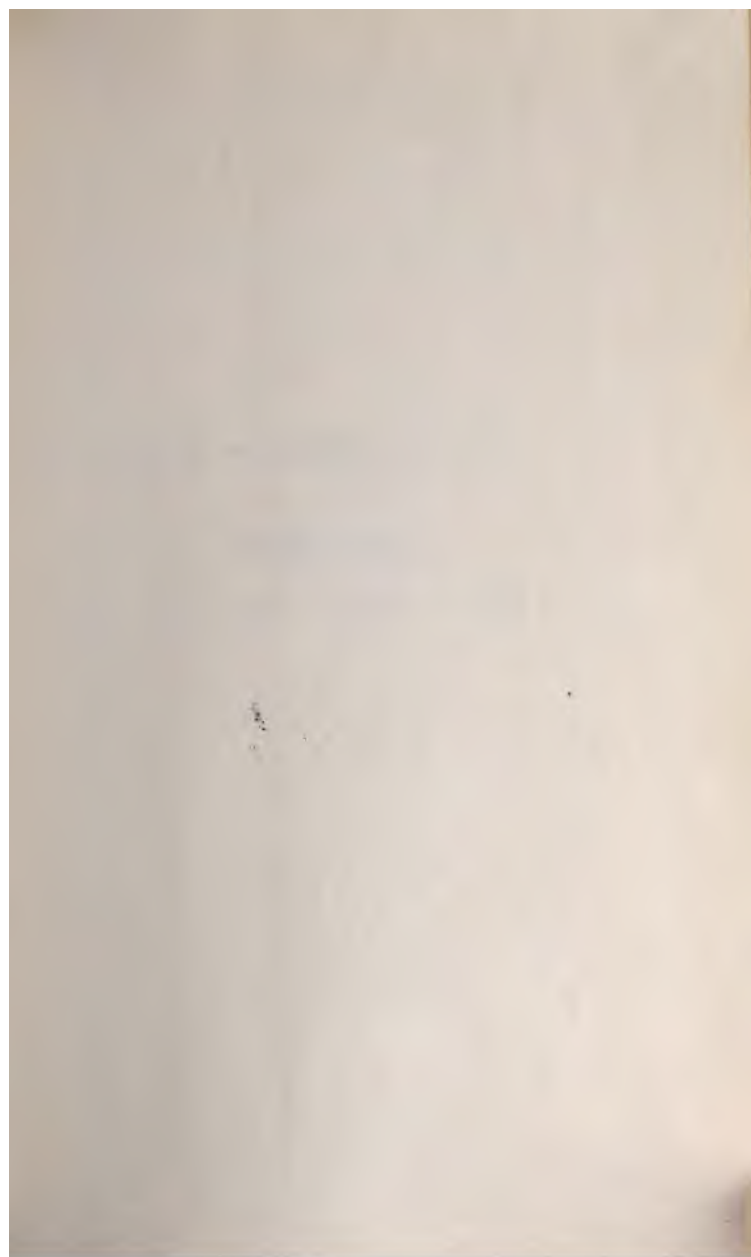
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JOHNSON'S  
LIVES OF THE POETS.



JOHNSON'S  
//  
LIVES OF THE POETS.

EDITED, WITH NOTES, BY  
MRS. ALEXANDER NAPIER.

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY .

J. W. HALES, M.A.,  
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON, AND  
CLARK LECTURER AT TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

VOL. I.

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TO THE MEMORY OF  
ALEXANDER NAPIER, M.A.,  
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, VICAR OF HOLKHAM, NORFOLK, EDITOR OF THE  
CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF BARROW'S WORKS, AND BOSWELL'S JOHNSON.

THIS ATTEMPT TO COMPLETE THE WORK HE  
DESIGNED AND COMMENCED IS  
DEDICATED BY THE  
EDITOR.

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE first thing to be desired in the new edition of a standard work, is, by common consent, the acquisition of a genuine text. This has been attained in the present case by printing from the edition of 1783, which was revised by Johnson himself. Mr. Peter Cunningham, the last Editor, professed to do this, but he did not scruple to correct, in the text itself, what he considered Johnson's mistakes, altering names and dates, inserting matter deliberately omitted by Johnson, and even re-arranging paragraphs in accordance with information obtained since Johnson's time.

Any such proceeding produces a feeling of uncertainty and want of confidence, and has been carefully avoided. Our text is absolutely as Johnson left it, the necessary corrections being made in footnotes, for which when unsigned the Editor is responsible.

A pure text thus secured, all diligence has been used to correct mis-statements by the light of modern research, to supply the references too often omitted by Johnson, and to verify his quotations. But this has not always been possible. The wonderful memory to which Johnson trusted so implicitly sometimes deceived him, and he permitted himself a latitude in quotation which makes him often difficult, sometimes impossible, to follow.

An attempt has been made to elucidate the text by short notes, biographical or explanatory. For these the indulgence of some readers is requested for the sake of other readers, whose studies have led them in different

directions, and who, in this age of hurry, lack the time or opportunity to hunt up information for themselves.

To accomplish her task, however imperfectly, the Editor has not hesitated to avail herself of all the material within her reach, though always with due acknowledgment. She has adopted many notes from Mr. Cunningham, and some from Mr. Arnold, Mr. Milnes, and Mr. Firth.

With such a mass of notes and references, the difficulty arose of distinguishing the few notes inserted by Johnson himself. To prevent confusion, and avoid the offensive recurrence of "Editor," the only alternative seemed to be to sign his own notes with his name. This is, however, an indignity offered to the great author, in his own book, and has been adopted, with hesitation and apology, as the least of two evils.

It is now the Editor's pleasing duty to offer her most grateful thanks to those who have so kindly and courteously aided her.

To Dr. Isidor Kopernicki and M. Pauli of the Jagolonienne University at Cracow, for the very curious and important information regarding the Scotch settlers in Poland, and the tax called by Johnson a "contribution."

To Professor David Masson, for his note on the Metaphysical Poets.

To the Historiographer Royal of Scotland, for permission to give particulars relating to the family of Skene, and to the Rev. A. C. Hallen for assistance on this subject.

To the Rev. H. S. Fagan, for his notes on the connection of Swift with the affairs of Ireland.

To E. Maunde Thompson, Esq., for his interesting note on the British Museum in Gray's time.

To Dr. H. R. Luard, Registrar at Cambridge, and the Rev. T. Vere Beyne, Keeper of the Archives at Oxford, for their forbearance with persistent and troublesome inquiries.

To Dr. S. R. Gardiner, Dr. Jessopp, Dr. E. Moore, and

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

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the Rev. Ronald Bayne, for information on various details most readily granted.

To Dr. Garnett, for his friendly and opportune criticism to some treasures in the British Museum.

And above all to her friend, R. F. Sketchley, Esq., of the Dyce and Forster Library, South Kensington, whose valuable assistance has been most generously and constantly rendered, and to her brother, the Rev. James Cotterill, whose patient and accurate research has saved her from many a blunder and supplied many a deficiency.

ROBINA SAPIEK

BROMLEY COLLEGE, Dec. 22, 1889.



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## INTRODUCTION.

JOHNSON'S "Lives of the Poets" was written towards the close of his life, and first published partly in 1779, and partly in 1781. The faithful Boswell describes it as "that admirable performance . . . which is the richest, most beautiful, and indeed most perfect production of Johnson's pen." And Boswell's contemporaries received it with profound submission and reverence. The oracle had spoken, and men duly adored the majestic utterances. To us of to-day the work appears of much less intrinsic importance than when it first came out. Many of the judgments pronounced have not found final acceptance; some have been wholly reversed. But yet for us too it is a work of great value—a work exhibiting much acuteness and vigour of mind, and that contains many suggestions of permanent use as well as much information not elsewhere preserved, and, to mention its greatest interest, a work that recalls the intellectual tone and temper of its age with a fidelity and fulness that make it of inestimable service to anyone who will thoroughly study the eighteenth century.

The facts as to its undertaking are given in a letter from Edward Dilly, a "bookseller" living in the Poultry, to Boswell, dated Sept. 20, 1777. In the early years of George the Third's reign there was beginning to be felt, through the spread of education and learning, a need of a Collection of English Poetry. An Edinburgh firm of publishers, the Martins, made the first attempt to satisfy this growing de-



mand. The London "booksellers," or publishers, as we should say, not to be outdone, and jealous of "an invasion of what we call our Literary Property," formed a rival scheme. "A select number of the most respectable" of them "met on the occasion; and, on consulting together, agreed that all the proprietors of copyright in the various poets should be summoned together; and, when their opinions were given, to proceed immediately on the business. Accordingly, a meeting was held, consisting of about forty of the most respectable booksellers of London, when it was agreed that an elegant and uniform edition of 'the English Poets' should be immediately printed, with a concise account of the life of each author by Dr. Samuel Johnson; and that three persons should be deputed to wait upon Dr. Johnson, to solicit him to undertake the 'Lives,' viz., T. Davies, Strahan, and Cadell. The Doctor very politely undertook it, and seemed exceedingly pleased with the proposal. As to the terms, it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own; he mentioned two hundred guineas; it was immediately agreed to [no wonder!]; and a further compliment I believe will be made him. A committee was likewise appointed to engage the best engravers, viz., Bartolozzi, Sherwin, Hall, etc. Likewise, another committee for giving directions about the paper, printing, etc.; so that the whole will be conducted with spirit, and in the best manner, with respect to authorship, editorship, engravings, etc. My brother [Charles, Edward's business partner] will give you a list of the poets we mean to give, many of which are within the time of the Act of Queen Anne, which Martin and Bell [Bell was to sell the Edinburgh Collection in London—was a kind of London agent to the Martins] cannot give, as they have no property in them. The proprietors are almost all the booksellers in London of consequence."

There was much in this undertaking to delight Johnson,

and much that he could do with the utmost ease. The choice of the poets to be represented he seems to have left mainly to his employers, except that he suggested the admission of Blackmore, Pomfret, Yalden and Watts. Nowadays we should scarcely tolerate a collection of English poetry that recognized nobody before Cowley—that wholly ignored Chaucer and Spenser, to say nothing of Drayton, of Daniel, of Sackville and many other Elizabethans, and yet could find a place for such poetasters as Messrs. Yalden, Stepney, Duke, Fenton. Indeed, the starting-point of this memorable compilation is significant of the time that produced it. We must certainly not blame only the publishers for its beginning where it does. An age had arisen that had but scanty knowledge of the great Elizabethan Period, and even less of what literature preceded it. And we can scarcely separate Johnson from the publishers in this respect. In his Dictionary his familiarity with our older authors is for the most part conspicuous by its absence; and again and again in the "Lives" itself we observe this same unacquaintance. Thus, in the Life of Rowe, he seems to have no idea of Rowe's indebtedness in his "Fair Penitent" to Massinger's "Fatal Dowry." So Southey hardly puts the matter too strongly when he observes that the poets before the Restoration were to Johnson what the world before the flood is (that is, used to be) to historians; and therefore, so far as Johnson is concerned, we need not regret that he was not called upon to discuss poets and poetry, of whom and of which he had such a meagre knowledge and intelligence. All ages are apt to be extremely well-satisfied with themselves; the eighteenth century was eminently so. It believed that poetry properly began with Waller, and had gone on improving ever since. Evidently it had its own idea of what should be called "poetry," and it was a different idea from ours. Thus the "booksellers" of Johnson's time acted

according to their lights in starting from the middle of the seventeenth century; and Johnson's lights were much the same as theirs, and so he could co-operate without dissension, and at his best. He sent the *Life of Cowley* to press in December, 1777. Then quickly followed those of Waller, Denham, and Butler. In August, 1778, he finished what, long years before it had been in his mind to compose, the *Life of Dryden*. "When I was a young fellow," he said in 1776, "I wanted to write the *Life of Dryden*." This certainly he wrote *con amore*. In the beginning of 1779 he disposed of *Milton*. And in the following March appeared the first part of the collection, containing twenty-two *Lives* out of the fifty-two that were to be given. In April, 1780, we find him advancing, but not rapidly, with the second part. "I have not quite neglected my '*Lives*,'" he writes to Mrs. Thrale on April 6th; "Addison is a long one, but it is done. Prior is not short, and that is done too. I am upon Rowe, which cannot fill much paper. Seward called on me to-day, and read Spence." April 11th: "You are at all places of high resort, and bring home hearts by dozens, while I am seeking for something to say of men about whom I know nothing but their verses, and sometimes very little of them. Now I have begun, however, I do not despair of making an end." April 15th: "I thought to have finished Rowe's *Life* to-day, but I have had five or six visitors who hindered me, and I have not been quite well. Next week I hope to dispatch four or five of them." May 9th: "My '*Lives*' creep on. I have done Addison, Prior, Rowe, Granville, Sheffield, Collins, Pit, and almost Fenton." May 25th: "Congreve, whom I despatched at the Borough election, is one of the best of the little *Lives*, but then I had your conversation."

The work had now lost its novelty; and also some minor writers of whom he knew little had to be considered. "I



have sat at home in Bolt Court all the summer," he writes to Boswell, Aug. 21, 1780, "thinking to write the 'Lives,' and a great part of the time only thinking. Several of them, however, are done, and I still think to do the rest." But the toil was by this time greater than the pleasure. He was not unready to receive assistance. The *Life of Young* "was written at my request by a gentleman [Mr., afterwards Sir, Herbert Croft], who had better information than I could easily have obtained; and the public will perhaps wish that I had solicited and obtained more such favours from him." In the case of *Savage* he made use of the *Life* which he had written nearly forty years before, just after his friend's death. Its length and minuteness put it altogether out of the proper proportion to the other biographies; but as a picture of the wild Bohemianism that marked the literary life about the time Johnson came up to London, we would not wish it shorter, to use Johnson's own way of speaking. At last the labour was accomplished. "Some time in March," he notes in his review of the past year made at Easter, 1781, "I finished the 'Lives of the Poets,' which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work and working with vigour and haste."

The result may be described as a biographical history of English poetry from the Restoration to just before the first French Revolution, written by one of the most able and distinguished representatives of that very definitely marked period. And assuredly no one was more competent than Johnson to write such a history, if such a history was to be written. For a third of all the years included in his work he had himself been an author of note, and a well-known and prominent figure in the literary circles of the day. Thus in many cases he could speak on the strength of direct and immediate knowledge; in some on the strength of close intimacy. "Nobody can write the life of

a man," he once said to Boswell, "but those who have eat and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him." Of course, such relations with his subjects were not altogether advantageous. They were indeed pernicious, if it was hoped to produce critical estimates of any lasting value; and no doubt it was so hoped, however vainly. But such relations provided Johnson with a store of information which was invaluable for his purpose, and which must always make his work, however defective in other ways, indispensable to the careful explorer of our literary history. They, to a large extent, gave it the value of a contemporary chronicle. Much of this information he gathered easily without effort, as he moved to and fro in the society of his day, as he sat on that "throne of human felicity," a tavern chair, or, at the tables of Mrs. Thrale and Mrs. Montagu, conversed with authorities who were only too proud to gratify, so far as they could, any curiosity he cared to show. It is to be regretted that he did not trouble himself to extend or augment it by other and severer researches. But with all his wonderful mental energy, he was a man of indolent habits. He was never weary of exercising his mind in conversation, but alone in his study he soon relaxed his exertions—he soon "remitted," as he would have said, and become gloomy and despondent and inert. "To adjust the minute events of literary history," he remarks in his *Life of Dryden*, "is tedious and troublesome. It requires indeed no great force of understanding, but often depends upon enquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand." Of course, he did make some inquiries; but on the whole he relied on his memory rather than on his industry. His memory was amazingly powerful; but it needed support. "Regarded as collections of facts," says Mr. Milnes in his valuable *Introduction to the volume of Johnson's "Select Works,"* published

by the Clarendon Press. "these 'Lives' are full of errors. Few of the dates are accurately given, and many of the incidents are founded upon mere hearsay evidence, and do not bear a moment's examination . . . It is enough, as an example, to call attention here to the strange story of Dryden's funeral, and the obvious falsehood of the incident about Voltaire narrated by Pope and handed on by Johnson." Mr. Cunningham, in the Preface to his edition of the "Lives" gives a long list of errors, some not trivial, committed by the author. "In the first written of the 'Lives,' that of Cowley, he tells us in one place that Cowley's unfinished Epic is in three books, and in another place (a few pages on) that it is in four. We may safely suspect that he had never read Cowley's 'Comedy,' for he mistakes its title. In his 'Waller,' he finds fault with Fenton for an error made by himself from confounding two poems. In the same life he calls Hampden the uncle of Waller, instead of the cousin. In his 'Life of Milton' he cites Philips (Milton's nephew) for a remarkable statement not to be found in Philips, and attributes to Ellwood (Milton's Quaker friend) the preservation of a doubtful story, said to have come from Milton's own lips, which is certainly not in Ellwood . . . He says of Dryden's 'King Arthur' what is true of 'Albion and Albanus'; mistakes the origin of 'Mac Flecknoe,' and the date of its appearance; informs his readers that King James and not King Charles made Dryden historiographer. . . . He is altogether wrong about Cowley's parentage. He makes Lord Roscommon live into King James's reign; calls Lord Rochester's daughter his sister; refers to Palaprat's 'Alcibiade,' when there is no such production; makes 'Venice Preserved' the last of Otway's plays, which it was far from being; . . . confounds Sir Richard Steele with Dickie Norris the actor; attributes a discovery to Congreve—that Pindaric odes are regular—when the discovery is to be found in

Ben Jonson and Philips's 'Theatrum Poetarum;' taxes Warburton with making an arrangement of Pope's 'Epistles,' which Pope himself had made; . . . while he is wrong in the years of birth of Savage, Somerville, Yalden, and Collins, he is equally incorrect respecting the dates of death of Dryden, Garth, Parnell, and Collins."

But such inaccuracies and carelessnesses can, for the most part, be very easily corrected. And if the work has real merits, its value is not seriously impaired by them.

"Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis  
Offendar maculis quos aut incuria fudit,  
Aut humana parum cavit natura."

It may seem a much more damaging admission that the critical verdicts given by Johnson are such as we think often inadequate, and sometimes entirely perverse and wrong. In the eyes of the present century three of the truest and finest poets of all Johnson's catalogue are Milton, Collins and Gray. Johnson's criticisms of these spirits, so "finely touched," and to so "fine issues," appear beyond blame. We read them at first with mere amazement; presently we perceive that he has no ear at all for what seem to us voices of incomparable sweetness and of immortal power. Johnson's remarks on 'Lycidas' are truly memorable for their want of insight and appreciation. He says "the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers displeasing. There is no nature, for there is nothing new . . . . What image of tenderness can be excited by these lines:

'We drove a field, and both together heard  
What time the grey fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night?'

We know that they never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the re-



presentation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote that it is never sought because it cannot be known when it is found. . . . Surely,"—thus he concludes his suicidal observations—"No man could have fancied that he read 'Lycidas' with pleasure, had he not known its author." We seem to be in the midst of Philistia as we read these sentences—to be perusing some journal published at Gath, or listening to some professor with a chair at Askalon. And so, when we are assured that Milton's "Sonnets" "deserve not very particular criticism; for the best it can only be said that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth ["Captain or colonel," etc.] and twenty-first ["Cyriack, whose grand-sire," &c.] are truly entitled to this slender commendation." Again, he pronounces "Cato" to be "unquestionably the noblest production of Addison's genius." What would now be Addison's measure of fame, if it depended on his "Cato?" Of the story of Prior's "Henry and Emma," which is the story of "The Nut-brown Maid," he writes in this wise: "The example of Emma, who resolves to follow an outlawed murderer, wherever fear and guilt shall drive him, deserves no imitation; and the experiment by which Henry tries the lady's constancy is such as must end either in infamy to her, or in disappointment to himself." We might be ready enough to ridicule such a version, or perversion, of a simple old story as the artificial Prior produces; but this is just what Johnson does not and will not do. What irritates him is the tale itself, the old romantic tale of passionate devotion. He stands firm and solid in his eighteenth century, and has no sympathy with the ages of romance. How significant a fact that in his day the word enthusiasm had a bad meaning. For him the golden light that surrounds those lovers "fades into the light of common day;" out of the land of poetry with its heights and its free air, he hales them, so to speak, into the close courts of

prose. But "The Nut-brown Maid" is not to be judged in this spirit, she is outside such jurisdiction. "No; he doth but mistake the truth totally." He does not understand her language. It sounds to him like mere wantonness. He cannot imagine the situation. To him it presents itself as a mere vulgar intrigue, at which all respectable people must frown and be disgusted. Again, his attitude towards our old ballad poetry is always supercilious and scornful. In his *Life of Addison* he mentions, not without sympathy, the ridicule which Wagstaff and Dennis heaped upon Addison's "Chevy Chase" papers. "In 'Chevy Chase,'" he concludes, echoing Dennis' words with full approval, "there is not much of either bombast or affectation, but there is chill and lifeless imbecility. The story cannot possibly be told in a manner that shall make less impression on the mind." Could the dullest reader show less discernment, or express the opposite of the fact with superior stolidity?

These critical heresies and perversenesses, as most people nowadays would undoubtedly pronounce them, cannot be removed from Johnson's work as can the inaccuracies to which attention has been called above. They belong to the main tissue of it. And the modern reader might be tempted to fling aside volumes that contain judgments so mistaken and so blind. And, if "The Lives of the Poets," by Dr. Johnson is studied in the hope of there finding worthy and final criticisms of our best poetry, the reader may well throw it aside. But it should not be studied with any such hope. It should be studied as the best extant exposition of the critical ideas current in the last century. Criticism is yet but an infant science—yet but a nascent art. We may be quite certain that many literary tastes and views now prevailing will strike posterity as curiously ludicrous. What, for instance, will be thought of many of Macaulay's conclusions? But, if our age could

provide posterity with such an admirable record of its mind as is Johnson's "Lives," certainly it would be of infinite value to the future historian of our times. Johnson, for all his seeming originality and independence, is essentially the offspring of his age.

"So free we seem, so fettered fast we are."

He cannot be said, as we do sometimes say of men of genius, to be before his age, at least as a critic. He is in it and of it. And we should, before all things, understand that he speaks to us with the voice of his age, and that the value of his criticisms is historical rather than absolute, and that their value in this respect can scarcely be exaggerated. His critical point of view is very different from ours, and so what he sees and cares to see is often not in the least what we see and care to see. He thought that criticism, like poetry, had greatly "improved" by his time. "Addison," he writes, "is now to be considered as a critic—a name which the present generation is scarcely willing to allow him. His criticism is condemned as tentative, as experimental rather than scientific; and he is considered as deciding by taste rather than by principles." So that his age believed it had attained to a criticism that deserved the title of scientific. This was one of the many mistakes that age made about itself—one of the many overratings of its own merits and achievements. We are yet far from having reached such a critical system. But just as Johnson's age had no doubt made some progress, visible enough if we compare his remarks on "Paradise Lost" with those in the well-known "Spectator" papers, so certainly there has been some advance since Dr. Johnson's age, and especially, perhaps, in this respect, viz., in our broader, if less distinct, conception of what is meant by art. To use a much abused term, but one of real meaning and value, æsthetic criticism had not yet arisen



in England in the days when "The Lives" were written. Art was regarded rather as the handmaid of morality than of beauty. Johnson's dominant thought, when he looks at a poem, is not so much what pleasure and delight does it give? what phase or form of beauty does it embody? but rather what lesson does it convey? Certainly this is always his ultimate test. Art for him is didactic rather than æsthetic. His Apollo, it seems, is "ordained"—is "in holy orders." Apollo of the golden locks and of the free forest,

"Qui rore puro Castaliæ lavit  
Crines solutos, qui Lyciæ tenet  
Dumeta natalemque silvam,"

receives the tonsure, so to speak, and abandons his wild woodland ways. On the parterres of Parnassus we see rising churches, built in the style of the day, when perhaps our architecture was at its lowest point. Johnson is a moralist, first and last. This is one reason why, as we have seen, he cannot endure "The Nut-brown Maid." Her loveliness does not fascinate him at all, because her principles seem to him so unsatisfactory. He can only cry out, as with justice, perhaps, Ulysses cries out when he sees Cressida in all her beauty, and with all her wiles:

"Fie, fie upon her!  
There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out  
At every joint and motive of her body."

"But I will no longer look for particular faults," he writes after much carping at Gray's "Bard;" "yet let it be observed that the Ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but suicide is always to be had without expense of thought." Could an ethical intrusion be more impertinent? Only a confirmed and hardened moralizer, so to say, could have injected such a remark on

such an occasion. Would Johnson soberly maintain that the result of Gray's "Bard" is to encourage suicide? Indeed, he is moral in season and out of season; he has a perpetual tendency towards the pulpit; there is ever a sermon ready in his head.

We repeat that in these critical short-comings he represents his age; he is both a product and a producer of it, both its servant and its master. And no one who wishes to understand that age can afford to neglect "The Lives of the Poets."

But we must not leave the impression that Johnson's criticisms are always ill-directed and futile. Most of the poets whom he discusses were well within his range and reach; and he discusses them with the most extensive knowledge, with a thoroughly intelligent sympathy, and with an acuteness and a shrewdness that perpetually surprise and enlighten. He is best on Dryden and Pope; and, if he has not said the last words on those subjects, he has said words that cannot be forgotten, whenever the poets are discussed.

And if we cannot exactly apply to him his own generous phrase about Goldsmith, we may certainly say that, what he touched, he placed in a new light and aspect, and often invested with a fresh interest and attraction. His activity of mind was wonderful, and his was a mind of power. To the utmost he resolved to think for himself,

"Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,"

and to give his thoughts precise and vigorous expression. The inscription on his monument in St. Paul's well describes him as a man "singularis exempli." So certainly he was both intellectually and morally. It is impossible to be in his society, as in a sense we may be in reading his writings, without being both instructed and invigorated. Whatever weakness and faults may be confessed, it remains

that Johnson was a great man. "He was a great man," says one of the finest critics of our own day, so recently gone from us, "and great men are always instructive. The more we study him, the higher will be our esteem for the power of his mind, the width of his interests, the largeness of his knowledge, the freshness, fearlessness, and strength of his judgments. The higher too will be our esteem of his character." Perhaps we may invert the Latin phrase Bacon quotes, viz.: "*Studia abeunt in mores*," that is, "A man's studies pass into his character," and read "*Mores abeunt in studia*," that is, "A man's character passes into his studies," expresses itself inevitably in his writings. And certainly it is not easy to overstate the respect and reverence that an acquaintance with Johnson's life inspires. He was not only a great but a good man. Whatever his insight into the highest and best poetry, he lived a life that Milton would have recognized to be a poem—a life of splendid fortitude, of unostentatious but most bountiful charity, of rare sincerity and truthfulness. How inexpressibly trivial his faults of manner and breaches of etiquette by the side of these transcendent virtues! It is good to sit at the feet of such a man, whether we agree with his utterances, or disagree. Let him be endowed also in large measure, as Johnson was endowed, with the excellent gifts of wit and humour, and we have before us one of the most interesting and entertaining, as well as one of the most well-informed, shrewd and wise companions and masters.

JOHN W. HALES.

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON.

*August 3, 1889.*



THE  
L I V E S  
OF THE MOST EMINENT  
ENGLISH POETS;  
WITH  
CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS  
ON THEIR  
W O R K S.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON.  
IN FOUR VOLUMES.  
A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

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THE FIRST VOLUME.

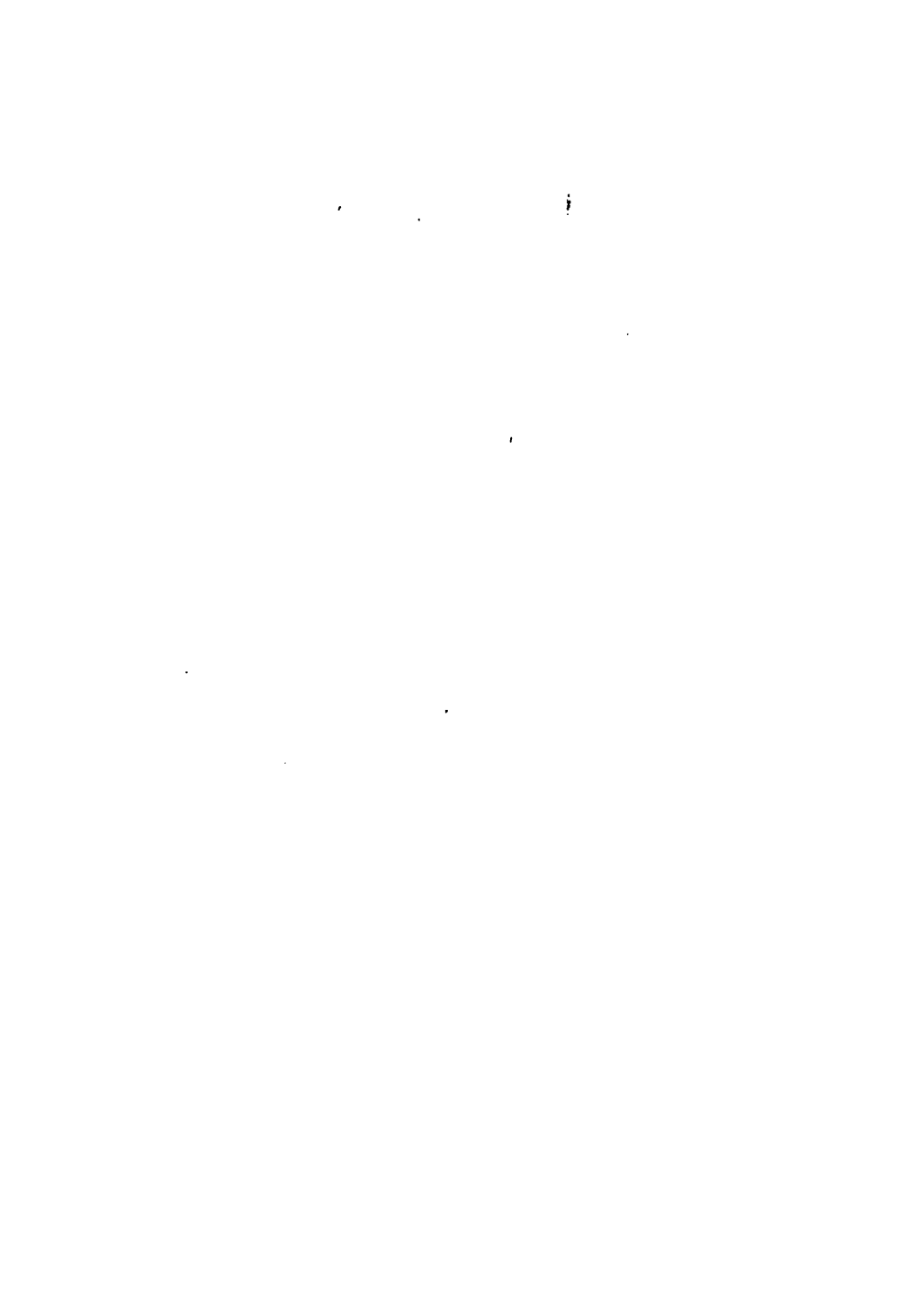
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MDCCLXXXIII.





## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Booksellers having determined to publish a Body of English Poetry, I was persuaded to promise them a Preface to the Works of each Author; an undertaking, as it was then presented to my mind, not very extensive or difficult.

My purpose was only to have allotted to every Poet an Advertisement, like those which we find in the French Miscellanies, containing a few dates and a general character; but I have been led beyond my intention, I hope, by the honest desire of giving useful pleasure.

In this minute kind of History, the succession of facts is not easily discovered; and I am not without suspicion that some of Dryden's works are placed in wrong years. I have followed Langbaine, as the best authority for his plays: and if I shall hereafter obtain a more correct chronology, will publish it; but I do not yet know that my account is erroneous.

Dryden's "Remarks on Rymer" have been somewhere printed before. The former edition I have not seen. This was transcribed for the press from his own manuscript.

As this undertaking was occasional and unforeseen, I must be supposed to have engaged in it with less provision of materials than might have been accumulated by longer premeditation. Of the later writers at least I might, by attention and enquiry, have gleaned many par-

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**ADVERTISEMENT.**

ticulars, which would have diversified and enlivened my Biography. These omissions, which it is now useless to lament, have been often supplied by the kindness of Mr. Steevens and other friends; and great assistance has been given me by Mr. Spence's Collections, of which I consider the communication as a favour worthy of publick acknowledgement.

COWLEY.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

[Cowley himself published his *Poems*, 1656, folio. Dean Sprat in 1668 brought out Cowley's *Latin Poems* with a Life, also in Latin. This Life he translated and prefixed to an edition of *Cowley's Works*, 1669, folio. Reprints followed as new editions in 1674, 1678, 1681, 1684, 1700, 1707, all in folio, and in 1710, first in 3 vols. 8vo. In 1772 Bishop Hurd published an edition with notes, and Aikin in 1802. The grand edition of *Cowley's Works*, with *Memorial Introduction* by Grosart, 1881, in the Chertsey Worthies Library, is exhaustive, and probably contains all that can now be discovered. Extracts from Cowley's Poems are accessible in Ward's *Select Eng. Poets*, vol. ii. p. 244.

The edition of Cowley's Poems here used for reference is the reprint from Sprat's edition, 1710, 3 vols. 8vo. Grosart's edition is referred to as *C. W. L.* Saintsbury's *Scott's Dryden* as *S. S. D.* The Boswell's *Johnson* used is Napier's edition 1884.

The details of Cowley's Westminster and University career are now for the first time clearly stated from the college books.]

## LIVES OF THE POETS.

### COWLEY.

THE Life of Cowley, notwithstanding the penury of English biography, has been written by Dr. Sprat,<sup>1</sup> an author whose pregnancy of imagination and elegance of language have deservedly set him high in the ranks of literature; but his zeal of friendship, or ambition of eloquence, has produced a funeral oration rather than a history: he has given the character, not the life of Cowley; for he writes with so little detail, that scarcely anything is distinctly known, but all is shewn confused and enlarged through the mist of panegyrick.

Abraham Cowley<sup>2</sup> was born in the year one thousand six hundred and eighteen. His father was a grocer, whose condition Dr. Sprat conceals under the general appellation of a citizen; and, what would probably not have been less

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Sprat, D.D. (1636-1713), Canon of Windsor, Dean of Westminster, and afterwards Bishop of Rochester. In his Poems, which are not numerous, he followed Cowley as his model; and one of his chief works is the *Life of Cowley*, written first in Latin, prefixed to an edition (1668) of Cowley's Latin Poems, and afterwards (1669) in English, before his English works.

<sup>2</sup> "The Life of Cowley he (Johnson) himself considered as the best of the whole, on account of the dissertation on the metaphysical poets." Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 4, where a few Readings in this Life are also given.

carefully suppressed, the omission of his name in the register of St. Dunstan's parish gives reason to suspect that his father was a <sup>1</sup>sectary. <sup>2</sup>Whoever he was, he died before the birth of his son, and consequently left him to the care of his mother; whom Wood <sup>3</sup>represents as struggling earnestly to procure him a literary education, and who, as she lived to the age of eighty, had her solicitude rewarded by seeing her son eminent, and, I hope, by seeing him fortunate, and partaking his prosperity. We know at least, from Sprat's account, that he always acknowledged her care, and justly paid the dues of filial gratitude.

In the window of his mother's apartment lay Spenser's *Fairy Queen*; <sup>4</sup> in which he very early took delight to read, till, by feeling the charms of verse, he became, as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the accidents, which, sometimes remembered, and perhaps sometimes forgotten, produce that particular designation of mind, and propensity for some certain science or employment, which is commonly called Genius. The true Genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to, some particular direction. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great Painter of the present age, had the first fondness for his art excited by the perusal of Richardson's treatise. <sup>5</sup>

By his mother's solicitation he was admitted into Westminster school, where he was soon distinguished. <sup>6</sup> He was wont, says Sprat, to relate, "That he had this defect in

<sup>1</sup> The father's will, quoted by Mr. P. Cunningham, shows that he was a citizen and stationer of the parish of St. Michael-le-Querne.

<sup>2</sup> *Færiæ Croniques*, part ii. vol. iv. p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> The second folio edition of the *Færiæ Queen* was re-issued with a new title-page in 1617, the year before Cowley was born.

<sup>4</sup> *Essay on the Theory of Poetry* (1713), and *Two Discourses on the Art of Criticism, as it relates to Poetry, and the Science of a Connoisseur*, 1719, by Jonathan Richardson.

<sup>5</sup> Cowley was entered for a scholarship, 21st April, 1636, but was not elected.

his memory at that time, that his teachers never could bring it to retain the ordinary rules of grammar."<sup>1</sup>

This is an instance of the natural desire of man to propagate a wonder. It is surely very difficult to tell anything as it was heard, when Sprat could not refrain from amplifying a commodious incident, though the book to which he prefixed his narrative contained its confutation. A memory admitting some things, and rejecting others, an intellectual digestion that concocted the pulp of learning, but refused the husks, had the appearance of an instinctive elegance, of a particular provision made by Nature for literary politeness. But in the author's own honest relation,<sup>2</sup> the marvel vanishes: he was, he says, such "an enemy to all constraint, that his master never could prevail on him to learn the rules without book." He does not tell that he could not learn the rules, but that, being able to perform his exercises without them, and being an "enemy to constraint," he spared himself the labour.

Among the English poets, Cowley, Milton, and Pope, might be said "to lisp in numbers;" and have given such early proofs, not only of powers of language, but of comprehension of things, as to more tardy minds seems scarcely credible. But of the learned puerilities of Cowley there is no doubt, since a volume of his poems was not only written but printed in his thirteenth year;<sup>3</sup> containing, with other poetical compositions, "The tragical History of

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Cowley*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *On Myself*, Essay XI.

<sup>3</sup> *Poetical Blossomes*, by A. C. Lond. 4to, pp. 62, 1633. Cowley therefore was in his fifteenth year. On its appearance Richard Crashaw addressed to the youthful author the beautiful little poem, "On two greene Aprieockes sent to Cowley by Sir Crashaw" (afterwards published in his *Delights*, 1648), in which he acknowledges "How much my Summer waites upon thy Spring."—*Works of Richard Crashaw in Fuller Worthies' Library*, vol. i. p. 269, ed. Grosart.

Vaughan's portrait of Cowley at the age of thirteen prefixed to the *Poetical Blossomes* probably led to the mistake in his age.



Pyramus and Thisbe," written when he was ten years old; and "Constantia and Philetus," written two years after.

Whilst he was yet at school he produced a comedy called "Love's Riddle," though it was not published till he had been some time at Cambridge. This comedy is of the pastoral kind, which requires no acquaintance with the living world, and therefore the time at which it was composed adds little to the wonders of Cowley's minority.

In 1636, he was removed to Cambridge;<sup>1</sup> where he continued his studies with great intenseness; for he is said to have written, while he was yet a young student, the greater part of his *Davideis*; a work of which the materials could not have been collected without the study of many years, but by a mind of the greatest vigour and activity.

Two years after his settlement at Cambridge he published "Love's Riddle,"<sup>2</sup> with a poetical dedication to Sir Kenelm Digby;<sup>3</sup> of whose acquaintance all his contempo-

<sup>1</sup> Cowley came from Westminster, but not as a scholar. In the Conclusion Book we find: "Junii 14, 1637, Cowley chosen and admitted scholler by the King's letters dispensatory." He matriculated as a pensioner of Trinity College, July 7, 1636; took his B.A. as Eleventh Wrangler, 1639-40; M.A. 1643. He was elected Fellow of Trinity in 1640, and held his fellowship till death. The vacancy caused by his death was filled up when Sir Isaac Newton was elected fellow.

<sup>2</sup> *Love's Riddle, A Pastorall Comedie, written at the time of his being King's scholler in Westminster Schoole*, by A. Cowley. London. 12mo. 1638.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665), author, naval commander, and diplomatist; son of the Sir Everard Digby who was executed for his share in the Gunpowder Plot. He commanded a squadron against the Venetians in 1628. He was Chancellor to Queen Henrietta Maria, and was one of the Council of the Royal Society when first incorporated. He "wrangled" with Hobbes, was intimate with Descartes, the friend of Ben Jonson, and altogether one of the foremost men of his time.

aries seem to have been ambitious; and "*Naufragium Joculare*,"<sup>1</sup> a comedy written in Latin, but without due attention to the ancient models: for it is not loose verse, but mere prose. It was printed, with a dedication in verse to Dr. Comber,<sup>2</sup> master of the college; but having neither the facility of a popular nor the accuracy of a learned work, it seems to be now universally neglected.

At the beginning of the civil war, as the Prince<sup>3</sup> passed through Cambridge in his way to York, he was entertained with the representation of the "*Guardian*," a comedy, which Cowley says was neither written nor acted, but rough-drawn by him, and repeated by the scholars. That this comedy was printed<sup>4</sup> during his absence from his country, he appears to have considered as injurious to his reputation; though, during the suppression of the theatres, it was sometimes privately acted with sufficient approbation.

In 1643, being now master of arts, he was, by the prevalence of the parliament, ejected from Cambridge,<sup>5</sup> and sheltered himself at St. John's College in Oxford; where, as is said by Wood,<sup>6</sup> he published a satire called "*The Puritan and Papist*," which was only inserted in the last

<sup>1</sup> *Naufragium joculare, Comoedia.* Lond. 1638. 8vo.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Comber, D.D. (1575-1654), Dean of Carlisle, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and twice Vice-Chancellor. He was ejected from all his preferments, and imprisoned for sending the University Plate to the King, and refusing the Covenant. For an account of the Cambridge University at this time, see Whewell's *Barrow and his Academical Times*, in *Barrow's Works*, vol. ix. pp. 1-55, ed. Napier.

<sup>3</sup> Prince Charles, afterwards Charles II. passed through Cambridge in 1641.

<sup>4</sup> In 1650.

<sup>5</sup> See Cowley's beautiful poem, *A Dedicatory Elegy to the Most Illustrious University of Cambridge*, translated by the Rev. R. Wilton, in Grosart's *Chertsey Worthies' Library*, part 295, p. xix.

<sup>6</sup> *Fasti Oxonienses*, part ii. vol. iv. p. 209.

collection of his works;<sup>1</sup> and so distinguished himself by the warmth of his loyalty, and the elegance of his conversation, that he gained the kindness and confidence of those who attended the King, and amongst others of Lord Falkland, whose notice cast a lustre on all to whom it was extended.

About the time when Oxford was surrendered to the parliament, he followed the Queen to Paris, where he became secretary to the Lord Jermin, afterwards Earl of St. Albans, and was employed in such correspondence as the royal cause required, and particularly in cyphering and decyphering the letters that passed between the King and Queen; an employment of the highest confidence and honour. So wide was his province of intelligence, that, for several years, it filled all his days and two or three nights in the week.

In the year 1647, his "Mistress" was published; for he imagined, as he declared in his preface to a subsequent edition, that "poets are scarce thought freemen of their company without paying some duties, or obliging themselves to be true to Love."

This obligation to amorous ditties owes, I believe, its original to the fame of Petrarch, who, in an age rude and uncultivated, by his tuneful homage to his Laura, refined the manners of the lettered world, and filled Europe with love and poetry. But the basis of all excellence is truth: he that professes love ought to feel its power. Petrarch

<sup>1</sup> The Collection, that is, for which these Lives were written. Boswell, writing in April, 1777, inquires: "Pray tell me about this edition of 'English Poets, with a Preface, biographical and critical, to each Author, by Samuel Johnson, D.D.' which I see advertised." And in May of the same year, Johnson replies: "I am engaged to write little Lives, and little Prefaces, to a little edition of English Poets." For details of the work which began so modestly, and expanded so liberally, see Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iii. pp. 142-145, 169, 382; vol. iv. pp. 1-60.

was a real lover, and Laura doubtless deserved his tenderness. Of Cowley, we are told by Barnard who has means enough of information, that, whatever he may talk of his own inflammability, and the variety of characters by which his heart was divided, he in reality was in love but once, and then never had resolution to tell his passion.

This consideration cannot but shake in some measure the reader's esteem for the work and the author. The excellence, is natural; it is natural because the poet sought to solicit reciprocal regard by an elaborate display of his own qualifications. The desire of pleasing has in different men produced actions of heroism and effusions of wit; but it seems as reasonable to appear the champion of the poet of an "airy nothing," and to quarrel as to whether what Cowley might have learned from his master Shakspeare to call the "dream of a shadow."

It is surely not difficult in the solitude of a college or in the bustle of the world to find useful studies and serious employment. No man needs to be so imprudent with life as to squander it in visionary dreams and fictitious occurrences. The man that has been so engaged himself charged with treason or perjury, and has been brought to an elaborate purgation of his conscience by crimes which he was never when the passions of the moment committing, differs only by the intensity of the feelings from him who praises beauty which he never saw, and is consumed by jealousy which he never felt; sighs for a friend who never invited, and sometimes forsakes his friend who never ransacks his memory, for images which he never saw; is the gaily of hope, or the gloominess of despair; and pursues his imaginary Chloris or Phyllis who never existed, fading as her beauty, and vanishing as her virtues.

At Paris, as secretary to Lord Jermin,<sup>1</sup> he was engaged in transacting things of real importance with real men and real women, and at that time did not much employ his thoughts upon phantoms of gallantry. Some of his letters to Mr. Bennet, afterwards Earl of Arlington,<sup>2</sup> from April to December in 1650, are preserved in "*Miscellanea Aulica*," a collection of papers published by Brown.<sup>3</sup> These letters, being written like those of other men whose mind is more on things than words, contribute no otherwise to his reputation than as they shew him to have been above the affectation of unseasonable elegance, and to have known that the business of a statesman can be little forwarded by flowers of rhetoric.

One passage, however, seems not unworthy of some notice. Speaking of the Scotch treaty<sup>4</sup> then in agitation:

"The Scotch treaty," says he, "is the only thing now in which we are vitally concerned; I am one of the last hopers, and yet cannot now abstain from believing, that an agreement will be made: all people upon the place incline to that of union.<sup>5</sup> The Scotch will moderate something of the rigour of their demands; the mutual necessity of an accord is visible, the King is persuaded of it. And to

<sup>1</sup> Wood states that Cowley was introduced to the notice of Lord Jermin by Dr. Stephen Goffe, a Brother of the Oratory (*Fasti Oratorum*, part ii. vol. iv. p. 210); but as the mother of the Mr. Harvey whose elegy he wrote, was related to Lord Jermin, Sprat's opinion that the introduction came through the Herveys, seems most probable.

<sup>2</sup> A member of the Cabal ministry, born 1618, died 1685.

<sup>3</sup> In 1702. These letters, fourteen in number, are reproduced in Grosart's *Chertsey Worthies' Library*, part 305 (Cowley, part 47), p. 345. The last is dated "Paris, September, 1653."

<sup>4</sup> This was the treaty signed by Charles, May 13th, 1650, when the Royalists were desirous that he should go in person to Scotland. By it he promised to sign the solemn league and covenant, to govern in civil matters by the advice of the parliament, and in religious affairs by that of the Kirk.

<sup>5</sup> A misprint; Cowley wrote not "*of union*," but "*of opinion*."



tell you the truth (which I take to be an argument above all the rest), Virgil has told the same<sup>1</sup> thing to that purpose."

This expression from a secretary of the present time would be considered as merely ludicrous, or at most as an ostentatious display of scholarship; but the manners of that time were so tinged with superstition, that I cannot but suspect Cowley of having consulted on this great occasion the Virgilian lots,<sup>2</sup> and to have given some credit to the answer of his oracle.

<sup>1</sup> A misprint; Cowley wrote not "*the same*," but "*me some*."

<sup>2</sup> "Wee proceeded to mention the King's (Charles I.) readinesse in foretelling events, and from this to his Sors Virgiliana, which hapned at Oxford in the time of the late war, and whilst the parliament sate there; viz. that his majesty being tired out with businesse and afflictions, resolv'd to recreate himselfe with some young noblemen who were students there, by pricking in Virgile for his fortune, which he did, and lighted upon Dido's curse to Æneas when hee left her—

At bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,  
Finibus extorris, complexu avulsus Iuli,  
Auxilium imploret, videatque indigna suorum  
Funera; nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquæ  
Tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur:  
Sed cadat ante diem, mediaque inhumatus arena.<sup>3</sup>

*Æneid*, v. 615-20.

Whereat his majesty seem'd much concern'd, but sent it by Mr. German, now Earle of St. Alban's, to Mr. Cowley; then student of Christchurch, to translate them into English, with a command not to acquaint him whose Sors it was, which Mr. Cowley did thus:

By a bold people's stubborn arms oppress,  
Forc'd to forsake the land which he possest,  
Torn from his dearest son, let him in vain  
Seek help, and see his friends unjustly slain,  
Let him to bold unequall terms submit,  
In hopes to save his crown, yet loose both it  
And life at once; untimely let him dye,  
And on an open stage unbury'd lye."

*Diary of Dr. Edward Lake*, Jan. 29, 1677-8.

"The known story" of Mr. Cowley, and the Sors Virgilianæ, is

Some years afterwards, "business," says Sprat, "passed of course into other hands;" and Cowley, being no longer useful at Paris, was in 1656 sent back into England, that, "under pretence of privacy and retirement, he might take occasion of giving notice of the posture of things in this nation."

Soon after his return to London, he was seized by some messengers of the usurping powers, who were sent out in quest of another man; and, being examined, was put into confinement, from which he was not dismissed without the security of a thousand pounds given by Dr. Scarborow.<sup>1</sup>

This year<sup>2</sup> he published his poems, with a preface, in which he seems to have inserted something,<sup>3</sup> suppressed in subsequent editions, which was interpreted to denote some relaxation of his loyalty. In this preface he declares, that "his desire had been for some days past, and did still very vehemently continue, to retire himself to some of the American plantations," and to forsake this world for ever."

alluded to by Dr. Knightly Chetwood in his *Life of Virgil*, prefixed to Dryden's translation, and commonly, but erroneously, attributed to Walsh.—*P. Cunningham*.

<sup>1</sup> Scarborough, afterwards Sir Charles, physician and mathematician, 1616-1696. His anatomical lectures were highly celebrated. He was the author of various mathematical works, and an *Elegy* on Cowley.

<sup>2</sup> 1656.

<sup>3</sup> The suppressed page is given in Grosart's *Introduction to Cowley's Works*, part 295, C. W. L. p. xvii.

<sup>4</sup> A similar desire to escape from the known evils of the Old World to unknown happiness in the New led to the establishment of many of the Colonies or Plantations, as they were then styled. When Parliament met in Jan. 1620-21, the "decay of money" was greatly deplored. It was remarked that Spain, which had been a fountain of treasure, was now dried up, and a proposal was made to divert this unprofitable current by causing it to flow from Virginia and the Somers Isles. Urged by liberal

From the obloquy which the appearance of submission to the usurpers brought upon him, his biographer has been very diligent to clear him, and indeed it does not seem to have lessened his reputation. His wish for retirement we can easily believe to be undissembled; a man harrassed in one kingdom, and persecuted in another, who, after a course of business that employed all his days and half his nights in cyphering and decyphering, comes to his own country and steps into a prison, will be willing enough to retire to some place of quiet, and of safety. Yet let neither our reverence for a genius, nor our pity for a sufferer, dispose us to forget that, if his activity was virtue, his retreat was cowardice.

He then took upon himself the character of Physician, still, according to Sprat, with intention "to dissemble the main design of his coming over," and as Mr. Wood<sup>1</sup> relates, "complying with the men then in power (which was much taken notice of by the royal party), he obtained an order to be created Doctor of Physick, which being done to his mind (whereby he gained the ill-will of some of his friends), he went into France again, having made a copy of verses on Oliver's death."

This is no favourable representation, yet even in this not much wrong can be discovered. How far he complied with the men in power, is to be enquired before he can be blamed. It is not said that he told them any secrets, or assisted them by intelligence, or any other act. If he only promised to be quiet, that they in whose hands he was

encouragement, 3,500 persons left their homes in 1621-22 for Virginia. Later on, in the reign of George II. Georgia was colonized, principally for the relief of imprisoned debtors in England. For an account of the establishment of the different colonies, see Chalmers's *Introduction to the History of the Revolt of the Colonies*, Lond. 1780, reprinted Boston, 1845, and Lucas's *Charters of Old English Colonies*.

<sup>1</sup> *Fæsti Oxonienses*, part ii, vol. iv. p. 210.



might free him from confinement, he did what no law of society prohibits.

The man whose miscarriage in a just cause has put him in the power of his enemy may, without any violation of his integrity, regain his liberty, or preserve his life, by a promise of neutrality: for the stipulation gives the enemy nothing which he had not before; the neutrality of a captive may be always secured by his imprisonment or death. He that is at the disposal of another may not promise to aid him in any injurious act, because no power can compel active obedience. He may engage to do nothing, but not to do ill.

There is reason to think that Cowley promised little. It does not appear that his compliance gained him confidence enough to be trusted without security, for the bond of his bail was never cancelled; nor that it made him think himself secure, for at that dissolution of government, which followed the death of Oliver, he returned into France, where he resumed his former station, and staid till the Restoration.

"He continued," says his biographer,<sup>1</sup> "under these bonds till the general deliverance;" it is therefore to be supposed, that he did not go to France, and act again for the King, without the consent of his bondsman; that he did not shew his loyalty at the hazard of his friend, but by his friend's permission.

Of the verses on Oliver's death, in which Wood's narrative<sup>2</sup> seems to imply something encomiastick, there has been no appearance. There is a discourse concerning his government, indeed, with verses intermixed, but such as certainly gained its author no friends among the abettors of usurpation.

<sup>1</sup> Sprat's expression is, "the general Redemption."—Cowley's Works, Lond. Tonson, 1707, i. ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Fasti Oxonienses*, part ii. vol. iv. p. 210.

A doctor of physick however he was made at Oxford, in December 1657; and in the commencement of the Royal Society, of which an account has been published by Dr. Birch,<sup>1</sup> he appears busy among the experimental philosophers with the title of Doctor Cowley.

There is no reason for supposing that he ever attempted practice; but his preparatory studies have contributed something to the honour of his country. Considering Botany as necessary to a physician, he retired into Kent to gather plants; and as the predominance of a favourite study affects all subordinate operations of the intellect, Botany in the mind of Cowley turned into poetry. He composed in Latin several books on Plants,<sup>2</sup> of which the first and second display the qualities of Herbs, in elegiac verse; the third and fourth the beauties of Flowers in various measures; and in the fifth and sixth, the uses of Trees in heroick numbers.

At the same time were produced from the same university, the two great Poets, Cowley and Milton,<sup>3</sup> of dissimilar genius, of opposite principles; but concurring in the cultivation of Latin poetry, in which the English, till their works and May's poem appeared,<sup>4</sup> seemed unable to contest the palm with any other of the lettered nations.

<sup>1</sup> Birch, Thomas, D.D. (1705-1766), historian and biographer, fellow and secretary of the Royal Society. He bequeathed his very numerous and valuable books and MSS. to the British Museum. Johnson said of him: "Tom Birch is as brisk as a bee in conversation; but no sooner does he take a pen in his hand, than it becomes a torpedo to him, and benumbs all his faculties."—Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. i. p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Cowley's *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 241-495.

<sup>3</sup> Milton took his M.A. degree in 1632, Cowley in 1643.

<sup>4</sup> *Supplementum Lucani*, 1640. This was a translation into Latin of *A Continuation of Lucan's Historical Poem till the Death of Julius Cæsar*, in seven books, pub. 1630, by Thomas May. See Hallam's praise of this poem, *Lit. Eur.* iii. 54, and of May's *Hist. of the Parliament*, as "a good model of genuine English." *Ibid.* p. 151.

If the Latin performances of Cowley and Milton<sup>1</sup> be compared, for May I hold to be superior to both, the advantage seems to lie on the side of Cowley. Milton is generally content to express the thoughts of the ancients in their language; Cowley, without much loss of purity or elegance, accommodates the diction of Rome to his own conceptions.

At the Restoration, after all the diligence of his long service, and with consciousness not only of the merit of fidelity, but of the dignity of great abilities, he naturally expected ample preferments; and, that he might not be forgotten by his own fault, wrote a Song of Triumph. But this was a time of such general hope, that great numbers were inevitably disappointed; and Cowley found his reward very tediously delayed. He had been promised by both Charles the first and second the Mastership of the Savoy;<sup>2</sup> but "he lost it," says Wood,<sup>3</sup> "by certain persons, enemies to the Muses."

The neglect of the court was not his only mortification; having, by such alteration as he thought proper, fitted his

<sup>1</sup> See Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* iii. 33, on Milton's Latin Poems.

<sup>2</sup> The Savoy, of which nothing now remains but the Chapel, was, in 1246, the town house of Count Peter of Savoy, uncle by marriage to Henry III. About 1351 it became the headquarters, so to speak, of the Duchy Palatine of Lancaster. Here, in 1357, the captive French king was lodged by Edward III. Here John of Gaunt kept a kind of royal court, and here was signed and dated the grant of Chaucer's annuity. In the insurrection of 1381 the Palace was destroyed; and, on the duke's death in 1399, the manor was annexed to the Crown by Henry VII. who in his will provided for the building on it of a hospital for the poor. This institution seems to have resembled a monastery, and was provided with a master, chaplains, and brethren. The new buildings were magnificent, forming one of the sights of London; and the mastership was a much-coveted post. But in 1661 the buildings were partially destroyed by fire, and the hospital gradually deteriorated, till in 1702 it was formally dissolved. See Loftie's *Memorials of the Savoy*, 12mo, 1878.

<sup>3</sup> *Fæsti Oxonienses*, part ii. vol. iv. p. 210.



old Comedy of "The Guardian"<sup>1</sup> for the stage, he produced it<sup>2</sup> to the publick under the title of "The Cutter of Coleman-street."<sup>3</sup> It was treated on the stage with great severity, and was afterwards censured as a satire on the king's party.

Mr. Dryden, who went with Mr. Sprat to the first exhibition, related to Mr. Dennis,<sup>4</sup> "that when they told Cowley how little favour had been shewn him, he received the news of his ill success, not with so much firmness as might have been expected from so great a man."

What firmness they expected, or what weakness Cowley discovered, cannot be known. He that misses his end will never be as much pleased as he that attains it, even when he can impute no part of his failure to himself; and when the end is to please the multitude, no man perhaps has a right, in things admitting of gradation and comparison, to throw the whole blame upon his judges, and totally to exclude diffidence and shame by a haughty consciousness of his own excellence.

For the rejection of this play, it is difficult now to find the reason: it certainly has, in a very great degree, the power of fixing attention and exciting merriment. From the charge of disaffection he exculpates himself in his preface,<sup>5</sup> by observing how unlikely it is that, having fol-

<sup>1</sup> *The Guardian, a Comedie.* Lond. 1650. 4to.

<sup>2</sup> "Dec. 16th, 1661. After dinner to the Opera, where there was a new play (*Cutter of Coleman Street*), made in the year 1658, with reflections upon the late times; and it being the first time, the pay was doubled, and so to save money, my wife and I went into the gallery, and there sat and saw very well; and a very good play it is—it seems of Cowley's making."—*Pepys's Diary*, ed. Ld. Braybrooke, 1848, vol. i. p. 305.

<sup>3</sup> *Cutter of Coleman Street, a Comedy.* Lond. 1663.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. P. Cunningham gives a reference here to *Letters to and from Dryden*, &c. ed. John Dennis, 12mo, 1696. But the quotation is not to be found in that volume, which contains only one letter from Dryden.

<sup>5</sup> Works, vol. ii. p. 795. Cowley uses the word "restitution" where Johnson gives "restoration."

lowed the royal family through all their distresses, "he should chuse the time of their restoration to begin a quarrel with them." It appears, however, from the "Theatrical Register" of Downes<sup>1</sup> the prompter, to have been popularly considered as a satire on the Royalists.

That he might shorten this tedious suspense, he published his pretensions and his discontent, in an ode called "The Complaint;" in which he styles himself the *melancholy* Cowley.<sup>2</sup> This met with the usual fortune of complaints, and seems to have excited more contempt than pity.

These unlucky incidents are brought, maliciously enough, together in some stanzas, written about that time, on the choice of a laureat; a mode of satire, by which, since it was first introduced by Suckling,<sup>3</sup> perhaps every generation of poets has been teased:

"Savoy-missing Cowley came into the court,  
Making apologies for his bad play;  
Every one gave him so good a report,  
That Apollo gave heed to all he could say;  
Nor would he have had, 'tis thought a rebuke,  
Unless he had done some notable folly;  
Writ verses<sup>4</sup> unjustly in praise of Sam Tuke,<sup>5</sup>  
Or printed his pitiful Melancholy."<sup>6</sup>

His vehement desire of retirement now came again upon him. "Not finding," says the morose Wood,<sup>7</sup> "that pre-

<sup>1</sup> "This comedy being acted so perfectly well and exact, it was performed a whole week with a full audience. *Note.* This play was not a little injurious to the Cavalier indigent officers, especially the characters of Cutter and Worm."—Downes's *Roscius Anglicanus*, 1708, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *The Complaint.* Works, vol. ii. p. 584.

<sup>3</sup> *A Session of the Poets*, vol. i. p. 7, of Poems, Plays, &c. of Sir John Suckling, 1874, ed. by W. C. Hazlitt; *Life*, by Rev. A. Suckling prefixed.

<sup>4</sup> Cowley's Works, vol. ii. p. 190.

<sup>5</sup> Author of *The Adventures of Five Hours, a tragi-comedy*, Lond. 1663, 4to.

<sup>6</sup> *The Complaint.* Cowley's Works, vol. ii. p. 584.

<sup>7</sup> *Fasti Oxonienses*, part ii. vol. iv. p. 210.

ferment conferred upon him which he expected, while others for their money carried away most places, he retired discontented into Surrey."

"He was now," says the courtly Sprat,<sup>1</sup> "weary of the vexations and formalities of an active condition. He had been perplexed with a long compliance to foreign manners. He was satiated with the arts of a court; which sort of life, though his virtue made it innocent to him, yet nothing could make it quiet. Those were the reasons that moved him to follow the violent inclination of his own mind, which, in the greatest throng of his former business, had still called upon him, and represented to him the true delights of solitary studies, of temperate pleasures, and a moderate revenue below the malice and flatteries of fortune."

So differently are things seen, and so differently are they shown; but actions are visible, though motives are secret. Cowley certainly retired; first to Barn-elms, and afterwards to Chertsey,<sup>2</sup> in Surrey. He seems, however, to have lost part of his dread of the *hum of men*.<sup>3</sup> He thought himself now safe enough from intrusion, without the defence of mountains and oceans; and, instead of seeking shelter in America, wisely went only so far from the bustle of life as that he might easily find his way back, when solitude should grow tedious. His retreat was at first but slenderly accommodated; yet he soon obtained, by the interest of the Earl of St. Albans and the duke of Buckingham, such a lease of the Queen's lands as afforded him an ample income.

By the lover of virtue and of wit it will be solicitously

<sup>1</sup> Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> The house, which is still called by his name, stands on the west side of Guildford Street, near the railway station. The porch, from which it was originally named, was pulled down in 1786 by Mr. Clark, "for the safety and accommodation of the public," as it projected ten feet into the highway.—Thorne's *Environs of London*.

<sup>3</sup> *L'Allegro* of Milton.—JOHNSON.



asked, if he now was happy. Let him peruse one of his letters accidentally preserved by Peck,<sup>1</sup> which I recommend to the consideration of all that may hereafter pant for solitude.<sup>2</sup>

“TO DR. THOMAS SPRAT.

“Chertsey, 21 May, 1665.

“The first night that I came hither I caught so great a cold, with a defluxion of rheum, as made me keep my chamber ten days. And, two after, had such a bruise on my ribs with a fall, that I am yet unable to move or turn myself in my bed. This is my personal fortune here to begin with. And, besides, I can get no money from my tenants, and have my meadows eaten up every night by cattle put in by my neighbours. What this signifies, or may come to in time, God knows; if it be ominous, it can end in nothing less than hanging. Another misfortune has been, and stranger than all the rest, that you have broke your word with me, and failed to come, even though you told Mr. Bois that you would. This is what they call *Monstri simile*. I do hope to recover my late hurt so farre within five or six days (though it be uncertain yet whether I shall ever recover it) as to walk about again. And then, methinks, you and I and the Dean might be very merry upon S. Anne’s Hill. You might very conveniently come hither the way of Hampton Town, lying there one night. I write this in pain, and can say no more: *Verbum sapienti*.”

He did not long enjoy the pleasure or suffer the uneasiness of solitude; for he died<sup>3</sup> at the Porch-

<sup>1</sup> In the Appendix to *Memoirs of the Life and Actions of Oliver Cromwell*, by Francis Peck, 1740, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> See Cowley’s Essay, *The Dangers of an Honest Man in much Company*, No. VIII. vol. ii. p. 762; Johnson, *Idler*, No. 71, and *Rambler*, No. 6.

<sup>3</sup> “August 10th, 1667. Cowley, he tells me, is dead: who it seems, was a mighty civil, serious man, which I did not know before”—Pepys’s *Diary*, vol. i. p. 153. Lord Braybrooke remarks on this as a striking instance of the slow communication of intelligence, that Pepys could remain ignorant for a fortnight (Cowley died July 28th) of the death of so

house<sup>1</sup> in Chertsey in 1667, in the 49th year of his age.

He was buried with great pomp near Chaucer and Spenser;<sup>2</sup> and king Charles pronounced, "That Mr. Cowley had not left a better man behind him in England."<sup>3</sup> He is represented by Dr. Sprat<sup>4</sup> as the most amiable of mankind; and this posthumous praise may be safely credited, as it has never been contradicted by envy or by faction.

Such are the remarks and memorials which I have been able to add to the narrative of Dr. Sprat; who, writing when the feuds of the civil war were yet recent, and the minds of either party easily irritated, was obliged to pass

eminent a man, though he was buried in Westminster Abbey with every mark of respect.

<sup>1</sup> Now in the possession of Mr. Clarke, Alderman of London.—JOHNSON.

Richard Clarke (1739-1831). He was elected Chamberlain of London on the death of Wilkes, and held that post for thirty-three years. Introduced to Johnson by Hawkins, he frequently attended his suppers at the Mitre Tavern, and was proposed by Johnson himself as a member of the Essex Head Club. See a letter from Johnson to Clarke in Boswell's Johnson, vol. iv. p. 186. The crayon portrait of Cowley in the master's lodge at Trinity was presented by him in 1824.

<sup>2</sup> Cowley's monument was erected in 1675 by Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, with whom he had been at Trinity, and to whom Cowley was "best man" at his marriage with Mary Fairfax (immortalized by Marvell), at Bolton Percy Church, Sept. 15th, 1657.

<sup>3</sup> We have several authentic portraits of Cowley. The original of Faithorne's engraving is in the Bodleian Gallery; that which belonged to Clarendon is at Bothwell Castle; Lely's, formerly at Drayton Manor, is now in the Peel Collection in the National Gallery. A crayon drawing of him is in the master's lodge at Trinity College, Cambridge, which was presented by Richard Clarke, Esq. Chamberlain of the City of London in 1824, and of this a facsimile is given by Grosart. There is also a full-length portrait in the hall of Trinity College.

<sup>4</sup> In his epitaph on Cowley, which Johnson mentions in his *Essay on Epitaphs*, published in the Gentleman's Magazine, in 1740, "as always reading," on account of the style, "with indignation or contempt." See Works, ed. Murphy, 1810, vol. ii. p. 330.

over many transactions in general expressions, and to leave curiosity often unsatisfied. What he did not tell, cannot however now be known.<sup>1</sup> I must therefore recommend the perusal of his work, to which my narration can be considered only as a slender supplement.

Cowley,<sup>2</sup> like other poets who have written with narrow views, and, instead of tracing intellectual pleasure to its natural sources in the mind of man, paid their court to temporary prejudices, has been at one time too much praised, and too much neglected at another.

Wit, like all other things subject by their nature to the choice of man, has its changes and fashions, and at different times takes different forms. About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets; of whom, in a criticism on the works of Cowley, it is not improper to give some account.

The metaphysical poets<sup>3</sup> were men of learning, and to

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A. for Cowley's will, first printed by Mr. Cunningham in the Shakespeare Society's Papers.

<sup>2</sup> See Boswell's *Life of Cowley* and the *Metaphysical Poets*, vol. iv. p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Masson's remarks on the *Metaphysical Poets* are too important to be omitted here. After stating that, "collectively they might be described as the *Poets of Metrical Exposition and Metrical Intellection*," he proceeds: "It was mainly for poets practising this process of metrical intellection, though with some inclusion, also, of poets of metrical exposition, that Dr. Johnson invented or adopted from Dryden, the designation, METAPHYSICAL POETS. That, however, was a singularly unhappy choice of a name, vitiating as it did the true and specific meaning of the word 'metaphysical,' and pandering to the vulgar Georgian use of the word, which made it an adjective for anything that seemed hard, abstract, or bewildering." ~~Masson's *Life of Milton*, vol. i. p. 484, ed. 1881.~~ And the learned Professor elsewhere adds:—"The proper sense of *Metaphysical* is simply supernatural, as in Shakespeare's phrase, 'Fate and metaphysical aid,' and *Metaphysics* as a science, though it is certainly abstract and abstruse, is properly that variety of abstruse and abstract



shew their learning was their whole endeavour; but, unluckily resolving to shew it in rhyme, instead of writing poetry, they only wrote verses, and very often such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect, that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables.

If the father of criticism has rightly denominated poetry *μίμησις*,<sup>1</sup> *an imitative art*, these writers will, without great wrong, lose their right to the name of poets; for they cannot be said to have imitated any thing; they neither copied nature nor life; neither painted the forms of matter, nor represented the operations of intellect.

Those however who deny them to be poets, allow them to be wits. Dryden<sup>2</sup> confesses of himself and his contemporaries, that they fall below Donne in wit, but maintains that they surpass him in poetry.<sup>3</sup>

If Wit be well described by Pope,<sup>3</sup> as being, "that which has been often thought, but was never before so well expressed," they certainly never attained, nor ever sought it;

science which deals with the relations of the human mind to the supernatural, or with the ultimate validity of all man's highest beliefs and conceptions. Actually, *the Physical Poets* would, in some respects, have been a fitter name for the poets in question, than the one chosen,—one characteristic of those poets, especially of Donne, being their habit of expressing spiritual and philosophical meanings by forced physical images and analogies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Johnson probably does not here mean to imply that he was giving the *ipsissima verba* of the Aristotelian definition, for Aristotle does not actually use this term: his usual expression is that poetry is a *μίμησις*, but he also describes it as an *art*; so that it would not be incorrect to term it an "imitative art."

<sup>2</sup> Essay on Satire, prefixed to Dryden's translations of Juvenal.—Saintsbury's Scott's Dryden, 1882, vol. xiii. p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Essay on Criticism—

"True wit is nature to advantage dress'd,  
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd;"

Pope's Works, Ald. ed. vol. ii. p. 14.

for they endeavoured to be singular in their thoughts, and were careless of their diction. But Pope's account of wit is undoubtedly erroneous: he depresses it below its natural dignity, and reduces it from strength of thought to happiness of language.

If by a more noble and more adequate conception that be considered as Wit, which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just; <sup>1</sup> if it be that, which he that never found it, wonders how he missed; to wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen. Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found.

But Wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of *discordia concors*; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by

<sup>1</sup> Barrow's discourse on Wit is known to all; a fine extract from it is to be found, vol. iv. p. 58, of Boswell's Johnson. It may be interesting to compare with this a passage from Sydney Smith's Lecture on Wit and Humour: "But when wit is combined with sense and information; when it is softened by benevolence, and restrained by principle; when it is in the hands of a man who can use it and despise it; who can be witty, and something more than witty; who loves honour, justice, decency, good nature, morality, and religion ten thousand times better than wit, wit is then a beautiful and delightful part of our nature. Genuine and innocent wit like this is surely the flavour of the mind. Man could direct his ways by plain reason, and support his life by tasteless food; but God has given us wit, and flavour, and brightness, and laughter, and perfumes, to enliven the days of our pilgrimage, and to charm our pained steps over the burning marle."—*Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith*, by his daughter, Lady Holland, vol. i. p. 40.

together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions; their learning instructs, their subtilty surprises; but the reader commonly his improvement dearly bought, and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased.

On this account of their compositions it will be readily seen, that they were not successful in representing or expressing the affections. As they were wholly employed on things unexpected and surprising, they had no regard to the uniformity of sentiment which enables us to conceive and excite the pains and the pleasure of other minds: they never enquired what, on any occasion, they should say or do; but wrote rather as beholders than participants of human nature; as Beings looking upon good and evil as passive and at leisure; as Epicurean deities making observations on the actions of men, and the vicissitudes of life, without interest and without emotion. ✓ Their courtship is full of fondness, and their lamentation of sorrow. ✓ Wish was only to say what they hoped had never been said before. ✓

There was the sublime more within their reach than the sublime; for they never attempted that comprehensive pause of thought which at once fills the whole mind, and which the first effect is sudden astonishment, and is followed by rational admiration. Sublimity is produced by concentration, and littleness by dispersion. Great thoughts are general, and consist in positions not limited by circumstances, and in descriptions not descending to minute particulars. It is with great propriety that Subtlety, which in its original import means exility of particles, is taken in its poetical meaning for nicety of distinction. Those who lay on the watch for novelty could have little taste for greatness; for great things cannot have escaped observation. Their attempts were always analytick; they broke every image into fragments: and could no



more represent, by their slender conceits and labour'd particularities, the prospects of nature, or the scenes of life, than he, who dissects a sun-beam with a prism, can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon.

What they wanted however of the sublime, they endeavoured to supply by hyperbole; their amplification had no limits; they left not only reason but fancy behind them; and produced combinations of confused magnificence, that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined.

Yet great labour, directed by great abilities, is never wholly lost: if they frequently threw away their wit upon false conceits, they likewise sometimes struck out unexpected truth: if their conceits were far-fetched, they were often worth the carriage. To write on their plan, it was at least necessary to read and think. No man could be born a metaphysical poet, nor assume the dignity of a writer, by descriptions copied from descriptions, by imitations borrowed from imitations, by traditional imagery, and hereditary similes, by readiness of rhyme, and volubility of syllables.

In perusing the works of this race of authors, the mind is exercised either by recollection or inquiry; either something already learned is to be retrieved, or something new is to be examined. If their greatness seldom elevates, their acuteness often surprises; if the imagination is not always gratified, at least the powers of reflection and comparison are employed; and in the mass of materials which ingenious absurdity has thrown together, genuine wit and useful knowledge may be sometimes found, buried perhaps in grossness of expression, but useful to those who know their value; and such as, when they are expanded to perspicuity, and polished to elegance, may give lustre to works which have more propriety though less copiousness of sentiment.

This kind of writing, which was, I believe, borrowed from Marina<sup>1</sup> and his followers, had been recommended by the example of Donne, a man of very extensive and various knowledge; and by Jonson, whose manner resembled that of Donne more in the ruggedness of his lines than in the cast of his sentiments.

When their reputation was high, they had undoubtedly more imitators, than time has left behind. Their immediate successors, of whom any remembrance can be said to remain, were Suckling, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Cleve-<sup>land</sup>, and Milton. Denham and Waller sought another way to fame, by improving the harmony of our numbers. Milton tried the metaphysick style only in his lines upon Hobson the Carrier.<sup>2</sup> Cowley adopted it, and excelled his predecessors, having as much sentiment, and more musick. Suckling neither improved versification, nor abounded in conceits. The fashionable style remained chiefly with Cowley; Suckling could not reach it, and Milton disdained it.

Critical remarks are not easily understood without examples; and I have therefore collected instances of the modes of writing by which this species of poets, for poets they were called by themselves and their admirers, was eminently distinguished.

As the authors of this race were perhaps more desirous of being admired than understood, they sometimes drew their conceits from recesses of learning not very much frequented by common readers of poetry. Thus Cowley on "Knowledge":<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marini, G. B. a once celebrated Italian poet (1569-1625). His *Adone* (1623) was one of the most popular poems in the Italian language, little less so than the *Aminta* of Tasso, and the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini. For an account of Marini and of his *Adone*, the longest poem in the world, see Hallam's *Lit. Europe*, vol. iii. pp. 4-7.

<sup>2</sup> Ald. Milton, vol. iii. p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> Poems, vol. i. p. 41.

"The sacred tree midst the fair orchard grew ;  
 The phoenix Truth did on it rest,  
 And built his perfum'd nest,  
 That right Porphyrian tree which did true logick shew  
 Each leaf did learned notions give,  
 And th' apples were demonstrative :  
 So clear their colour and divine,  
 The very shade they cast did other lights outshine."

On Anacreon continuing a lover in his old age :

"Love was with thy life entwin'd,  
 Close as heat with fire is join'd,  
 A powerful brand prescrib'd the date  
 Of thine, like Meleager's fate.  
 Th' antiperistasis of age  
 More inflam'd thy amorous rage." <sup>1</sup>

In the following verses we have an allusion to a binical opinion concerning Manna :

"Variety I ask not: give me one  
 To live perpetually upon.  
 The person Love does to us fit,  
 Like manna, has the taste of all in it." <sup>2</sup>

Thus *Donne* shews his medicinal knowledge in encomiastic verses :

"In every thing there naturally grows  
 A Balsamum to keep it fresh and new,  
 If 'twere not injur'd by extrinsique blows ;  
 Your youth and beauty are this balm in you.  
 But you, of learning and religion,  
 And virtue and such ingredients, have made  
 A mithridate, whose operation  
 Keeps off, or cures what can be done or said." <sup>3</sup>

Though the following lines of *Donne*, on the last of the year, have something in them too scholastick are not inelegant :

<sup>1</sup> *Poems*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> *Donne's Poems*, p.

"This twilight of two years, not past nor next,  
 Some emblem is of me, or I of this,  
 Who, meteor-like, of stuff and form perplext,  
 Whose what and where, in disputation is,  
 If I should call me any thing, should miss.

"I sum the years and me, and find me not  
 Debtor to th' old, nor creditor to th' new,  
 That cannot say, my thanks I have forgot,  
 Nor trust I this with hopes; and yet scarce true  
 This bravery is, since these times shew'd me you."

DONNE.<sup>1</sup>

Yet more abstruse and profound is *Donne's* reflection  
 upon Man as a Microcosm :

"If men be worlds, there is in every one  
 Something to answer in some proportion  
 All the world's riches: and in good men, this  
 Virtue, our form's form, and our soul's soul is." <sup>2</sup>

Of thoughts so far-fetched, as to be not only unexpected,  
 but unnatural, all their books are full.

To a lady, who wrote poesies for rings.

"They, who above do various circles find,  
 Say, like a ring th' æquator heaven does bind.  
 When heaven shall be adorn'd by thee,  
 (Which then more heaven than 'tis, will be)  
 'Tis thou must write the poesy there,  
 For it wanteth one as yet,  
 Though the sun pass through't twice a year,  
 The sun, which is esteem'd the god of wit."

COWLEY.<sup>3</sup>

The difficulties which have been raised about identity in  
 philosophy, are by Cowley with still more perplexity ap-  
 plied to Love :

"Five years ago (says story) I lov'd you,  
 For which you call me most inconstant now ;

Donne's Poems, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Poems, vol. i. p. 21.

Pardon me, madam, you mistake the man ;  
 For I am not the same that I was then ;  
 No flesh is now the same 'twas then in me,  
 And that my mind is chang'd yourself may see.

" The same thoughts to retain still, and intents,  
 Were more inconstant far ; for accidents  
 Must of all things most strangely inconstant prove,  
 If from one subject they t'another move :  
 My members then, the father members were  
 From whence these take their birth, which now are here.  
 If then this body love what th' other did,  
 'Twere incest, which by nature is forbid."<sup>1</sup>

The love of different women is, in geographical poetry,  
 compared to travels through different countries :

" Hast thou not found, each woman's breast  
 (The land where thou hast travelled)  
 Either by savages possess'd,  
 Or wild, and uninhabited ?  
 What joy could'st take, or what repose,  
 In countries so uncivilis'd as those ?  
 Lust, the scorching dog-star, here  
 Rages with immoderate heat ;  
 Whilst Pride, the rugged Northern Bear,  
 In others makes the cold too great.  
 And where these are temperate known,  
 The soil's all barren sand, or rocky stone."

COWLEY.<sup>2</sup>

A lover, burnt up by his affection, is compared to  
 Egypt :

" The fate of Egypt I sustain,  
 And never feel the dew of rain,  
 From clouds which in the head appear ;  
 But all my too much moisture owe  
 To overflowings of the heart below."

COWLEY.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Poems, vol. i. p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mistress*, vol. i. p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 130.

The lover supposes his lady acquainted with the ancient laws of augury and rites of sacrifice :

“ And yet this death of mine, I fear,  
Will ominous to her appear :  
When found in every other part,  
Her sacrifice is found without an heart.  
For the last tempest of my death  
Shall sigh out that too, with my breath.” <sup>1</sup>

That the chaos was harmonised, has been recited of old ;  
but whence the different sounds arose, remained for a  
modern to discover :

“ Th’ ungovern’d parts no correspondence knew,  
An artless war from thwarting motions grew ;  
Till they to number and fixt rules were brought.  
Water and air he for the Tenor chose,  
Earth made the Base, the Treble flame arose.”

COWLEY.<sup>2</sup>

The tears of lovers are always of great poetical account ;  
but Donne has extended them into worlds. If the lines  
are not easily understood, they may be read again.

“ On a round ball  
A workman, that hath copies by, can lay  
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,  
And quickly make that, which was nothing, all.  
So doth each tear,  
Which thee doth wear,  
A globe, yea world, by that impression grow,  
Till thy tears mixt with mine do overflow  
This world, by waters sent from thee my heaven dissolved so.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Mistress*, vol. i. p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Davidels*, book i. vol. i. p. 306. One line—

“ By the eternal Mind’s Poetic thought,”

is omitted from the middle of this quotation, after “brought.”

<sup>3</sup> Donne’s Poems, p. 17.



On reading the following lines, the reader may perhaps cry out—*Confusion worse confounded.*

"Here lies a she sun, and a he moon here,  
She gives the best light to his sphere,  
Or each is both, and all, and so  
They unto one another nothing owe."

DONNE.<sup>1</sup>

✓ Who but Donne would have thought that a good man is a telescope?

"Though God be our true glass, through which we see  
All, since the being of all things is he,  
Yet are the trunks, which do to us derive  
Things, in proportion fit, by perspective  
Deeds of good men; for by their living here,  
Virtues, indeed remote, seem to be near."<sup>2</sup>

Who would imagine it possible that in a very few lines so many remote ideas could be brought together?

"Since 'tis my doom, Love's undershrieve,  
Why this reprieve?  
Why doth my She Advowson fly  
Incumbency?  
To sell thyself dost thou intend  
By candle's end,  
And hold the contrast thus in doubt,  
Life's taper out?  
Think but how soon the market fails,  
Your sex lives faster than the males;  
As if to measure age's span,  
The sober Julian were th' account of man,  
Whilst you live by the fleet Gregorian."

CLEIVELAND.<sup>3</sup>

Of enormous and disgusting hyberboles, these may be examples:—

<sup>1</sup> Donne's Poems, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Cleiveland's Poems, ed. 1687, p. 6.

"By every wind, that comes this way,  
Send me at least a sigh or two,  
Such and so many I'll repay  
As shall themselves make winds to get to you."  
COWLEY.<sup>1</sup>

"In tears I'll waste these eyes,  
By Love so vainly fed ;  
So lust of old the Deluge punished."  
COWLEY.<sup>2</sup>

"All arm'd in brass the richest dress of war,  
(A dismal glorious sight) he shone afar.  
The sun himself started with sudden fright,  
To see his beams return so dismal bright."  
COWLEY.<sup>3</sup>

An universal consternation :

"His bloody eyes he hurls round, his sharp paws  
Tear up the ground ; then runs he wild about,  
Lashing his angry tail and roaring out.  
"Beasts creep into their dens, and tremble there ;  
Trees, though no wind is stirring, shake with fear ;  
Silence and horror fill the place around :  
Echo itself dares scarce repeat the sound."  
COWLEY.<sup>4</sup>

Their fictions were often violent and unnatural.

Of his Mistress bathing :

"The fish around her crouded, as they do  
To the false light that treacherous fishers shew,  
And all with as much ease might taken be,  
As she at first took me :  
For ne'er did light so clear  
Among the waves appear,  
Though every night the sun himself set there."  
COWLEY.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *On Friendship in Absence*, vol. i. p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Despair*, vol. i. p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> *Dauides*, book iii. Cowley's Works, vol. ii. p. 408.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* book i. vol. i. p. 313.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 176.

The poetical effect of a Lover's name upon glass :

"My name engrav'd herein  
Doth contribute my firmness to this glass ;  
Which, ever since that charm, hath been  
As hard as that which grav'd it was."

DONNE.<sup>1</sup>

Their conceits were sometimes slight and trifling.

On an inconstant woman :

"He enjoys thy calmy sunshine now,  
And no breath stirring hears,  
In the clear heaven of thy brow,  
No smallest cloud appears.  
He sees thee gentle, fair and gay,  
And trusts the faithless April of thy May."

COWLEY.<sup>2</sup>

Upon a paper written with the juice of lemon, and red by the fire :

"Nothing yet in thee is seen ;  
But when a genial heat warms thee within,  
A new-born wood of various lines there grows ;  
Here buds an L, and there a B,  
Here sprouts a V, and there a T,  
And all the flourishing letters stand in rows."

COWLEY.<sup>3</sup>

As they sought only for novelty, they did not much enquire whether their allusions were to things high or low elegant or gross ; whether they compared the little to the great, or the great to the little.

Physick and Chirurgery for a Lover.

"Gently, ah gently, madam, touch  
The wound, which you yourself have made ;  
That pain must needs be very much,  
Which makes me of your hand afraid.

<sup>1</sup> Donne's Poems, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ode in Imitation of Horace*, Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> *The Mistress*, *ibid.* vol. i. p. 75.

Cordials of pity give me now,  
For I too weak for purgings grow."

COWLEY.<sup>1</sup>

### The World and a Clock.

"Mahol, th' inferior world's fantastic face,  
Through all the turns of matter's maze did trace;  
Great Nature's well-set clock in pieces took;  
On all the springs and smallest wheels did look  
Of life and motion; and with equal art  
Made up again the whole of every part."

COWLEY.<sup>2</sup>

A coal-pit has not often found its poet; but, that it may  
not want its due honour, Cleiveland has paralleled it with  
the Sun:<sup>3</sup>

"The moderate value of our guiltless ore  
Makes no man atheist, and no woman whore;  
Yet why should hallow'd vestal's sacred shrine  
Deserve more honour than a flaming mine?  
These pregnant wombs of heat would fitter be  
Than a few embers, for a deity.

Had he our pits, the Persian would admire  
No sun, but warm's devotion at our fire:  
He'd leave the trotting whipster, and prefer  
Our profound Vulcan 'bove that waggoner.  
For wants he heat, or light? or would have store  
Of both? 'tis here: and what can suns give more?  
Nay, what's the sun but, in a different name,  
A coal-pit rampant, or a mine on flame!  
Then let this truth reciprocally run,  
The sun's heaven's coalery, and coals our sun."

### Death, a Voyage:

"No family

Ere rigg'd a soul for heaven's discovery,

<sup>1</sup> *The Mistress*, Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 103.

<sup>2</sup>  *Davideis*, book i. *ibid.* p. 316.

<sup>3</sup> *Cleiveland*, *Poems*, p. 287.

With whom more venturers might boldly dare  
Venture their stakes, with him in joy to share."

DONNE.<sup>1</sup>

Their thoughts and expressions were sometimes grossly absurd, and such as no figures or licence can reconcile to the understanding.

A Lover neither dead nor alive :

"Then down I laid my head,  
Down on cold earth ; and for a while was dead,  
And my freed soul to a strange somewhere fled :

Ah, sottish soul, said I,

When back to its cage again I saw it fly :

Fool to resume her broken chain !

And row her galley here again !

Fool, to that body to return

Where it condemn'd and destin'd is to burn !

Once dead, how can it be,

Death should a thing so pleasant seem to thee,

That thou should'st come to live it o'er again in me ?"

COWLEY.<sup>2</sup>

A Lover's heart, a hand grenado.

"Wo to her stubborn heart, if once mine come  
Into the self-same room,

"Twill tear and blow up all within,

Like a grenado shot into a magazin.

Then shall Love keep the ashes, and torn parts,

Of both our broken hearts :

Shall out of both one new one make ;

From her's th' allay ; from mine, the metal take."

COWLEY.<sup>3</sup>

The poetical Propagation of Light :

"The Prince's favour is diffus'd o'er all,

From which all fortunes, names, and natures fall ;

<sup>1</sup> Donne's Poems, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mistress*, Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 111-112.



Then from those wombs of stars, the Bride's bright eyes,  
 At every glance a constellation flies,  
 And sows the court with stars, and doth prevent  
 In light and power, the all-ey'd firmament :  
 First her eye kindles other ladies' eyes,  
 Then from their beams their jewels lustres rise ;  
 And from their jewels torches do take fire,  
 And all is warmth, and light, and good desire."

DONNE.<sup>1</sup>

They were in very little care to clothe their notions with elegance of dress, and therefore miss the notice and the praise which are often gained by those, who think less, but are more diligent to adorn their thoughts.

That a mistress beloved is fairer in idea than in reality, is by Cowley thus expressed :

"Thou in my fancy dost much higher stand,  
 Than women can be plac'd by Nature's hand ;  
 And I must needs, I'm sure, a loser be,  
 To change thee, as thou'rt there, for very thee." <sup>2</sup>

That prayer and labour should co-operate, are thus taught by Donne :

"In none but us, are such mixt engines found,  
 As hands of double office : for the ground  
 We till with them ; and them to heaven we raise ;  
 Who prayerless labours, or without this, prays,  
 Doth but one half, that's none."

By the same author, a common topick, the danger of procrastination, is thus illustrated :

"—That which I should have begun  
 In my youth's morning, now late must be done ;  
 And I, as giddy travellers must do,  
 Which stray or sleep all day, and having lost  
 Light and strength, dark and tir'd must then ride post."

<sup>1</sup> Donne's Poems, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mistress*, Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 109.

All that Man has to do is to live and die; the sum of humanity is comprehended by Donne in the following lines:

"Think in how poor a prison thou didst lie;  
After, enabled but to suck and cry.  
Think, when 'twas grown to most, 'twas a poor inn,  
A province pack'd up in two yards of skin,  
And that usurp'd, or threaten'd with a rage  
Of sicknesses, or their true mother, age.  
But think that death hath now enfranchis'd thee;  
Thou hast thy expansion now, and liberty;  
Think, that a rusty piece discharg'd is flown  
In pieces, and the bullet is his own,  
And freely flies; this to thy soul allow,  
Think thy shell broke, think thy soul hatched but now."<sup>1</sup>

( They were sometimes indelicate and disgusting. Cowley thus apostrophises beauty:

( "—Thou tyrant, which leav'st no man free!  
Thou subtle thief, from whom nought safe can be!  
Thou murderer, which hast kill'd, and devil, which would'st  
damn me."<sup>2</sup>

Thus he addresses his Mistress:

"Thou who, in many a propriety,  
So truly art the sun to me,  
Add one more likeness, which I'm sure you can,  
And let me and my sun beget a man."<sup>3</sup>

Thus he represents the meditations of a Lover:

( "Though in thy thoughts scarce any tracts have been  
So much as of original sin,  
Such charms thy beauty wears as might  
Desires in dying confest saints excite.  
Thou with strange adultery  
Dost in each breast a brothel keep;  
Awake, all men do lust for thee,  
And some enjoy thee when they sleep."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Donne's Poems, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mistress*, Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 170.

## The true taste of Tears :

" Hither with crystal vials, lovers, come,  
 And take my tears, which are Love's wine,  
 And try your mistress' tears at home ;  
 For all are false, that taste not just like mine."  
 DONNE.<sup>1</sup>

## This is yet more indelicate :

" As the sweet sweat of roses in a still,  
 As that which from chaf'd musk-cat's pores doth trill,  
 As the almighty balm of th' early East,  
 Such are the sweet drops of my mistress' breast.  
 And on her neck her skin such lustre sets,  
 They seem no sweat-drops, but pearl coronets :  
 Rank sweaty froth thy mistress' brow defiles."  
 DONNE.<sup>2</sup>

Their expressions sometimes raise horror, when they in-  
 tend perhaps to be pathetic :

" As men in hell are from diseases free,  
 So from all other ills am I,  
 Free from their known formality :  
 But all pains eminently lie in thee."  
 COWLEY.<sup>3</sup>

They were not always strictly curious, whether the opinions from which they drew their illustrations were true ; it was enough that they were popular. Bacon remarks, that some falsehoods are continued by tradition, because they supply commodious allusions.

" It gave a piteous groan, and so it broke ;  
 In vain it something would have spoke :  
 The love within too strong for 't was,  
 Like poison put into a Venice-glass."  
 COWLEY.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Donne's Poems, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> *The Mistress*, Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 146.

<sup>4</sup> "*The heart breaking*," *The Mistress*, vol. i. p. 145.

In forming descriptions, they looked out not for images, but for conceits. Night has been a common subject, which poets have contended to adorn. Dryden's Night<sup>1</sup> is well known; Donne's is as follows:

"Thou seest me here at midnight, now all rest:  
Time's dead low-water; when all minds divest  
To-morrow's business, when the labourers have  
Such rest in bed, that their last church-yard grave,  
Subject to change, will scarce be a type of this,  
Now when the client, whose last hearing is  
To-morrow, sleeps; when the condemned man,  
Who when he opes his eyes, must shut them then  
Again by death, although sad watch he keep,  
Doth practise dying by a little sleep,  
Thou at this midnight seest me."<sup>2</sup>

It must be however confessed of these writers, that if they are upon common subjects often unnecessarily and unpoetically subtle; yet where scholastick speculation can be properly admitted, their copiousness and acuteness may justly be admired. What Cowley has written upon Hope, shows an unequalled fertility of invention:

"Hope, whose weak being ruin'd is,  
Alike if it succeed, and if it miss;  
Whom good or ill does equally confound,  
And both the horns of Fate's dilemma wound.  
Vain shadow, which dost vanish quite,  
Both at full moon and perfect night!  
The stars have not a possibility  
Of blessing thee;  
If things then from their end we happy call,  
'Tis Hope is the most hopeless thing of all.  
"Hope, thou bold taster of delight,  
Who, whilst thou should'st but taste, devour'st it quite!

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Emperor*, act iii. scene 2. S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 360.

<sup>2</sup> *Donne's Poems*, p. 215.

Thou bring'st us an estate, yet leav'st us poor,  
 By clogging it with legacies before!  
 The joys which we entire should wed,  
 Come deflower'd virgins to our bed;  
 Good fortunes without gain imported be,  
 Such mighty custom's paid to thee:  
 For joy, like wine, kept close does better taste;  
 If it take air before, its spirits waste.<sup>1</sup>

To the following comparison of a man that travels, and wife that stays at home, with a pair of compasses, it may be doubted whether absurdity or ingenuity has the better claim:

“Our two souls therefore, which are one,  
 Though I must go, endure not yet  
 A breach, but an expansion,  
 Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so  
 As stiff twin-compasses are two,  
 Thy soul the fixt foot, makes no show  
 To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,  
 Yet when the other far doth roam,  
 It leans, and hearkens after it,  
 And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must  
 Like th' other foot, obliquely run.  
 Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
 And makes me end where I begun.”

DONNE.<sup>2</sup>

In all these examples it is apparent, that whatever is improper or vicious, is produced by a voluntary deviation

<sup>1</sup> *The Mistress*, Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Donne's Poems, p. 36.



from nature in pursuit of something new and strange; and that the writers fail to give delight, by their desire of exciting admiration.

Having thus endeavoured to exhibit a general representation of the style and sentiments of the metaphysical poets, it is now proper to examine particularly the works of Cowley, who was almost the last of that race, and undoubtedly the best.

His Miscellanies<sup>1</sup> contain a collection of short compositions, written some as they were dictated by a mind at leisure, and some as they were called forth by different occasions; with great variety of style and sentiment, from burlesque levity to awful grandeur. Such an assemblage of diversified excellence no other poet has hitherto afforded. To choose the best, among many good, is one of the most hazardous attempts of criticism. I know not whether Scaliger<sup>2</sup> himself has persuaded many readers to join with him in his preference of the two favourite odes, which he estimates in his raptures at the value of a kingdom. I will however venture to recommend Cowley's first piece, which ought to be inscribed *To my muse*, for want of which the second couplet is without reference. When the title is added, there will still remain a defect; for every piece ought to contain in itself whatever is necessary to make it intelligible. Pope has some epitaphs without names; which are therefore epitaphs to be let, occupied indeed for the present, but hardly appropriated.

The ode on Wit<sup>3</sup> is almost without a rival. It was about the time of Cowley that *Wit*, which had been till

<sup>1</sup> Cowley's Works, vol. i. pp. 1-46.

<sup>2</sup> The Odes referred to are by Horace, book iv. Ode 3, p. 158 of Sir T. Martin's translation, and the Amœbean Ode, book iii. Ode 9, *ibid.* p. 118. Julius Scaliger said of these that he would rather have written them than be King of Aragon.

<sup>3</sup> Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 3.

then used for *Intellection*, in contradistinction to *Will*, took the meaning, whatever it be, which it now bears.

Of all the passages in which poets have exemplified their own precepts, none will easily be found of greater excellence than that in which Cowley condemns exuberance of Wit :

“ Yet 'tis not to adorn and gild each part,  
That shews more cost than art.  
Jewels at nose and lips but ill appear ;  
Rather than all things wit, let none be there.  
Several lights will not be seen,  
If there be nothing else between.  
Men doubt, because they stand so thick i' th' sky,  
If those be stars which paint the galaxy.”<sup>1</sup>

In his verses to lord Falkland,<sup>2</sup> whom every man of his time was proud to praise, there are, as there must be in all Cowley's compositions, some striking thoughts ; but they are not well wrought. His elegy on Sir Henry Wotton<sup>3</sup> is vigorous and happy, the series of thoughts is easy and natural, and the conclusion, though a little weakened by the intrusion of Alexander, is elegant and forcible.

It may be remarked, that in this Elegy, and in most of his encomiastic poems, he has forgotten or neglected to name his heroes.

In his poem on the death of Hervey,<sup>4</sup> there is much praise, but little passion, a very just and ample delineation of such virtues as a studious privacy admits, and such intellectual excellence as a mind not yet called forth to action can display. He knew how to distinguish, and how to commend the qualities of his companion ; but when he

<sup>1</sup> Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> For his safe return from the Northern Expedition against the Scots, Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Elegy on Sir Henry Wotton. Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 7, see post, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. William Harvey. Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 25.

wishes to make us weep, he forgets to weep himself, and diverts his sorrow by imagining how his crown of bays, if he had it, would *crackle* in the fire.<sup>1</sup> It is the odd fate of this thought to be worse for being true. The bay-leaf crackles remarkably as it burns; as therefore this property was not assigned it by chance, the mind must be thought sufficiently at ease that could attend to such minuteness of physiology. But the power of Cowley is not so much to move the affections, as to exercise the understanding.

The "Chronicle"<sup>2</sup> is a composition unrivalled and alone: such gaiety of fancy, such facility of expression, such varied similitude, such a succession of images, and such a dance of words, it is vain to expect except from Cowley. His strength always appears in his agility; his volatility is not the flutter of a light, but the bound of an elastic mind. His levity never leaves his learning behind it; the moralist, the politician, and the critick, mingle their influence even in this airy frolick of genius. To such a performance Suckling could have brought the gaiety, but not the knowledge; Dryden could have supplied the knowledge, but not the gaiety.

The verses to Davenant,<sup>3</sup> which are vigorously begun, and happily concluded, contain some hints of criticism very justly conceived and happily expressed. Cowley's critical abilities have not been sufficiently observed: the few decisions and remarks which his prefaces and his notes<sup>4</sup> on the *Davideis* supply, were at that time accessions to English literature, and shew such skill as raises our wish for more examples.

<sup>1</sup> Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> To Sir William D'Avenant, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> The *Davideis* in four books, with notes after each, *ibid.* vol. i. p. 287; vol. ii. p. 497.

The lines from Jersey<sup>1</sup> are a very curious and pleasing specimen of the familiar descending to the burlesque.

His two metrical disquisitions *for* and *against* Reason,<sup>2</sup> are no mean specimens of metaphysical poetry. The stanzas against knowledge produce little conviction. In those which are intended to exalt the human faculties, Reason has its proper task assigned it; that of judging, not of things revealed, but of the reality of revelation. In the verses *for* Reason is a passage which Bentley,<sup>3</sup> in the only English verses which he is known to have written, seems to have copied, though with the inferiority of an imitator.

“The holy Book like the eighth sphere does shine  
 With thousand lights of truth divine,  
 So numberless the stars that to our eye  
 It makes all but one galaxy :  
 Yet Reason must assist too ; for in seas  
 So vast and dangerous as these,  
 Our course by stars above we cannot know  
 Without the compass too below.”<sup>4</sup>

After this says Bentley :

“Who travels in religious jars,  
 Truth mix'd with error, clouds with rays,  
 With Whiston wanting pyx and stars,  
 In the wide ocean sinks or strays.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *An answer to a copy of verses sent me to Jersey, ibid.* vol. i. p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 41-44.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Richard Bentley (1662-1742). The famous scholar and critic. See *Tour to the Hebrides*, pp. 142, 235. The verse here quoted is from the *Parody on Titled's Imitation of Horace*, book iii. Ode ii. “Who strives to mount Parnassus’ hill.” The whole poem is given in Monk’s *Life of Bentley*, vol. ii. p. 174, and in Boswell’s *Johnson*, vol. iii. p. 443.

<sup>4</sup> Cowley’s *Works*, vol. i. p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell’s version is slightly different.



Cowley seems to have had, what Milton is believed to have wanted, the skill to rate his own performances by their just value, and has therefore closed his *Miscellanies* with the verses upon Crashaw,<sup>1</sup> which apparently excel all that have gone before them, and in which there are beauties which common authors may justly think not only above their attainment, but above their ambition.

To the *Miscellanies* succeed the "Anacreontiques,"<sup>2</sup> or paraphrastical translations of some little poems, which pass, however justly, under the name of "Anacreon." Of those songs dedicated to festivity and gaiety, in which even the morality is voluptuous, and which teach nothing but the enjoyment of the present day, he has given rather a pleasing than a faithful representation, having retained their spriteliness, but lost their simplicity. The "Anacreon" of Cowley, like the "Homer" of Pope, has admitted the decoration of some modern graces, by which he is undoubtedly made more amiable to common readers, and perhaps, if they would honestly declare their own perceptions, to far the greater part of those whom courtesy and ignorance are content to style the Learned.

These little pieces will be found more finished in their kind than any other of Cowley's works. The diction shews nothing of the mould of time, and the sentiments are at no great distance from our present habitudes of thought. Real mirth must be always natural, and nature is uniform. Men have been wise in very different modes: but they have always laughed the same way.

Levity of thought naturally produced familiarity of language, and the familiar part of language continues long the same: the dialogue of comedy, when it is transcribed from popular manners and real life, is read from age to age with equal pleasure. The artifice of inversion, by

<sup>1</sup> *On the Death of Mr. Crashaw*, Cowley's Works, vol. i. p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.



which the established order of words is changed, or of innovation, by which new words or new meanings of words are introduced, is practised, not by those who talk to be understood, but by those who write to be admired.

The "Anacreontiques" therefore of Cowley give now all the pleasure which they ever gave. If he was formed by nature for one kind of writing more than for another, his power seems to have been greatest in the familiar and the festive.

The next class of his poems is called "The Mistress,"<sup>1</sup> of which it is not necessary to select any particular pieces for praise or censure. They have all the same beauties and faults, and nearly in the same proportion. They are written with exuberance of wit, and with copiousness of learning; and it is truly asserted by Sprat,<sup>2</sup> that the plenitude of the writer's knowledge flows in upon his page, so that the reader is commonly surprised into some improvement. But, considered as the verses of a lover, no man that has ever loved will much commend them. They are neither courtly nor pathetick, have neither gallantry nor fondness. His praises are too far-sought, and too hyperbolical, either to express love, or to excite it: every stanza is crouded with darts and flames, with wounds and death, with mingled souls, and with broken hearts.

The principal artifice by which "The Mistress" is filled with conceits is very copiously displayed by Addison.<sup>3</sup> Love is by Cowley, as by other poets, expressed metaphorically by flame and fire; and that which is true of real fire is said of love, or figurative fire, the same word in the same sentence retaining both significations. Thus, "observing the cold regard of his mistress's eyes, and at the same time their power of producing love in him, he considers them as burning-glasses made of ice. Finding

<sup>1</sup> Cowley's Works, vol. i. pp. 65-179.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. xxi.

<sup>3</sup> *Spectator*, No. 62.

himself able to live in the greatest extremities of love, he concludes the torrid zone to be habitable. Upon the dying of a tree, on which he had cut his loves, he observes, that his flames had burnt up and withered the tree."<sup>1</sup>

These conceits Addison calls mixed wit;<sup>2</sup> that is, wit which consists of thoughts true in one sense of the expression, and false in the other. Addison's representation is sufficiently indulgent. That confusion of images may entertain for a moment; but being unnatural, it soon grows wearisome. Cowley delighted in it, as much as if he had invented it; but, not to mention the ancients, he might have found it full-blown in modern Italy.

"Aspice quam variis distringar Lesbia<sup>3</sup> curis,  
Uror, & heu! nostro manat ab igne liquor;  
Sum Nilus, sumque Ætna simul; restringite flammæ  
O lacrimæ, aut lacrimas ebibe flamma meas." <sup>4</sup>

One of the severe theologians<sup>5</sup> of that time censured him as having published a *book of profane and lascivious*

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, No. 62. Hurd's *Addison*, ed. Bohn, 1878, vol. ii. p. 359.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* See also the notes to Addison's translations from *Ovid's Metamorphoses*. *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> For Lesbia read Vesbia; line 3, for *flammas* read *flamnam*; line 4, omit *aut*.

<sup>4</sup> Sannazaro. *Epigrammaton*, Liber i. p. lxiv. In the first edition Johnson prefaced this quotation by "*thus Sannazaro*." The mistake of "Lesbia" for "Vesbia" perhaps prevented the verification of the verse which is addressed AD VESBIAM.

<sup>5</sup> Edmund Elys, Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, and Rector of East Allington, in Devon. He was the author of a *Miscellanea* in English and Latin verse, and numerous works, of which the most remarkable is his pamphlet against Tillotson's sermons on the Incarnation. He took his B.A. degree in 1655. The work alluded to in the text was, *An Exclamation to all those that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, against an Apology, written by an ingenious person for Mr. Cowley's lascivious and profane verses*. By a dutiful son of the Church of England, Lond., R. Clavel, 1670.

*Verses.* From the charge of profaneness, the constant tenour of his life, which seems to have been eminently virtuous, and the general tendency of his opinions, which discover no irreverence of religion, must defend him; but that the accusation of lasciviousness is unjust, the perusal of his works will sufficiently evince.

Cowley's "Mistress" has no power of seduction; "she plays round the head, but comes not at the heart."<sup>1</sup> Her beauty and absence, her kindness and cruelty, her disdain and inconstancy, produce no correspondence of emotion. His poetical account of the virtues of plants, and colours of flowers, is not perused with more sluggish frigidity. The compositions are such as might have been written for penance by a hermit, or for hire by a philosophical rhymers who had only heard of another sex; for they turn the mind only on the writer, whom, without thinking on a woman but as the subject for his talk, we sometimes esteem as learned, and sometimes despise as trifling, always admire as ingenious, and always condemn as unnatural.

The Pindaric Odes are now to be considered; a species of composition, which Cowley<sup>2</sup> thinks Pancirolus<sup>3</sup> might have counted in *his list of the lost inventions of antiquity*, and which he has made a bold and vigorous attempt to recover.

The purpose with which he has paraphrased an Olympick and Nemeæan Ode, is by himself sufficiently explained. His endeavour was, not to shew *precisely what Pindar spoke, but his manner of speaking*.<sup>4</sup> He was therefore not at all restrained to his expressions, nor much to his sentiments;

<sup>1</sup> Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle IV. Ald. Pope, vol. ii. p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Preface, *Pindaric Odes*, vol. i. p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> Guido Pancirollus (1523-1599), an Italian, author of many learned works. His *Rerum Memorabilium—jam olim deperditarum, et contra recens atque ingeniose inventarum*, 1599, has been often reprinted. A translation in 2 vols. pub. London, 1715.

<sup>4</sup> See note 2.



nothing was required of him, but not to write as Pindar would not have written.

Of the Olympick Ode<sup>1</sup> the beginning is, I think, above the original in elegance, and the conclusion below it in strength. The connection is supplied with great perspicuity, and the thoughts, which to a reader of less skill seem thrown together by chance, are concatenated without any abruption. Though the English ode cannot be called a translation, it may be very properly consulted as a commentary.

The spirit of Pindar is indeed not every where equally preserved. The following pretty lines are not such as his *deep mouth*<sup>2</sup> was used to pour :

“Great Rhea’s son,  
If in Olympus’ top where thou  
Sitt’st to behold thy sacred show,  
If in Alpheus’ silver flight,  
If in my verse thou take delight,  
My verse, great Rhea’s son, which is  
Lofty as that, and smooth as this.”<sup>3</sup>

In the Nemæan ode the reader must, in mere justice to Pindar, observe that whatever is said of *the original new moon, her tender forehead and her horns*,<sup>4</sup> is superadded by his paraphrast, who has many other plays of words and fancy unsuitable to the original, as,

“The table, free for every guest,  
No doubt will thee admit,  
And feast more upon thee, than thou on it.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The second Olympic Ode of Pindar.

<sup>2</sup> Addison uses this expression in his *Account of the Poets*, (Bohn’s ed. vol. i. p. 24). Probably it is derived from—

“Fervet immensusque ruit profundo  
Pindarus ore.” Hor. Carm. iv. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. i. p. 286.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 201.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 202, 203.

He sometimes extends his author's thoughts without improving them. In the Olympionick an oath is mentioned in a single word, and Cowley spends three lines in swearing by the "Castalian Stream."<sup>1</sup> We are told of Theron's<sup>2</sup> bounty, with a hint that he had enemies, which Cowley thus enlarges in rhyming prose :

"But in this thankless world the giver  
Is envied even by the receiver ;  
'Tis now the cheap and frugal fashion  
Rather to hide than own the obligation :  
Nay, 'tis much worse than so ;  
It now an artifice does grow  
Wrongs and injuries to do,  
Lest men should think we owe."<sup>3</sup>

It is hard to conceive that a man of the first rank in learning and wit, when he was dealing out such minute morality in such feeble diction, could imagine, either waking or dreaming, that he imitated Pindar.

In the following odes, where Cowley chooses his own subjects, he sometimes rises to dignity truly Pindarick, and, if some deficiencies of language be forgiven, his strains are such as those of the Theban bard were to his contemporaries :

"Begin the song, and strike the living lyre :  
Lo how the years to come, a numerous and well-fitted quire,  
All hand in hand do decently advance,  
And to my song with smooth and equal measure dance ;  
While the dance lasts, how long soe'er it be,  
My musick's voice shall bear it company ;  
Till all gentle notes be drown'd  
In the last trumpet's dreadful sound."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> The Tyrant of Agrigentum, B.C. 488, eulogized by Pindar.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. i. p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 214.



After such enthusiasm, who will not lament to find the poet conclude with lines like these !

“ But stop, my Muse—  
Hold thy Pindarick Pegasus closely in,  
Which does to rage begin—  
—’Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth’d horse—  
’Twill no unskilful touch endure,  
But flings writer and reader too that sits not sure.”<sup>1</sup>

The fault of Cowley, and perhaps of all the writers of the metaphysical race, is that of pursuing his thoughts to their last ramifications, by which he loses the grandeur of generality ; for of the greatest things the parts are little ; what is little can be but pretty, and by claiming dignity becomes ridiculous. Thus all the power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration ; and the force of metaphors is lost, when the mind by the mention of particulars is turned more upon the original than the secondary sense, more upon that from which the illustration is drawn than that to which it is applied.

Of this we have a very eminent example in the ode intitled “The Muse,”<sup>2</sup> who goes to *take the air* in an intellectual chariot, to which he harnesses Fancy and Judgement, Wit and Eloquence, Memory and Invention : how he distinguished Wit from Fancy, or how Memory could properly contribute to Motion, he has not explained ; we are however content to suppose that he could have justified his own fiction, and wish to see the Muse begin her career ; but there is yet more to be done.

“ Let the *postilion* Nature mount, and let  
The *coachman* Art be set ;  
And let the airy *footmen*, running all beside,  
Make a long row of goodly pride ;

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 217.

Figures, conceits, raptures, and sentences,  
 In a well-worded dress,  
 And innocent loves, and pleasant truths, and useful lies,  
 In all their gaudy *liveries*." <sup>1</sup>

Every mind is now disgusted with this cumber of magnificence; yet I cannot refuse myself the four next lines:

"Mount, glorious queen, thy travelling throne,  
 And bid it to put on;  
 For long though cheerful is the way,  
 And life alas allows but one ill winter's day." <sup>2</sup>

In the same ode, celebrating the power of the Muse, he gives her prescience, or, in poetical language, the foresight of events hatching in futurity; but having once an egg in his mind, he cannot forbear to shew us that he knows what an egg contains:

"Thou into the close nests of Time dost peep,  
 And there with piercing eye  
 Through the firm shell <sup>3</sup> and the thick white dost spy  
 Years to come a-forming lie,  
 Close in their sacred fecundine asleep." <sup>4</sup>

The same thought is more generally, and therefore more

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> It is impossible to refrain from remarking how this thought is beautified by our own Tennyson, where he says of Faith:

She reels not in the storm of warring words,  
 She brightens at the clash of 'Yes' and 'No,'  
 She sees the Best that glimmers through the Worst,  
 She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,  
 She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,  
 She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,  
 She hears the lark within the songless egg,  
 She finds the fountain where they wailed 'Mirage!' *Anc. Sag.*

<sup>4</sup> Vol. i. p. 218. Cowley has *Secondine*, not *fecundine*, and moreover a note to justify and explain the expression, with a quotation from the 9th Epistle of Seneca.

poetically, expressed by Casimir, a writer who has many of the beauties and faults of Cowley :

"Omnibus mundi Dominator horis  
Aptat urgendas per inane pennas,  
Pars adhuc nido latet, & futuros  
Crescit in annos."<sup>1</sup>

Cowley, whatever was his subject, seems to have been carried, by a kind of destiny, to the light and the familiar or to conceits which require still more ignoble epithets. *A* slaughter in the Red Sea, *new dies the waters name*; and England, during the Civil War, was *Albion no more, nor to be named from white*.<sup>2</sup> It is surely by some fascination not easily surmounted, that a writer professing to revive *the noblest and highest writing in verse*, makes this address to the new year :

"Nay, if thou lov'st me, gentle year,  
Let not so much as love be there,  
Vain fruitless love I mean ; for, gentle year,  
Although I fear,  
There's of this caution little need,  
Yet, gentle year, take heed  
How thou dost make  
Such a mistake ;  
Such love I mean alone  
As by thy cruel predecessors has been shewn ;  
For, though I have too much cause to doubt it,  
I fain would try, for once, if life can live without it."<sup>3</sup>

The reader of this will be inclined to cry out with Prior—

"— Ye Criticks, say,  
How poor to this was Pindar's style !"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Carmina Lyricorum*, Lib. i. Carm. iv. by Mathias Casimir Sarbievius, a modern Latin Poet, 1595-1640.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistle to Dr. Scarborough*, vol. i. p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> *To the New Year*, vol. i. p. 247.

<sup>4</sup> Prior's ballad on the recapture of Namur, (a parody on Boileau's *Ode, Sur la prise de Namur*).—Ald. Prior, vol. i. p. 73.



Even those who cannot perhaps find in the Isthmian or Nemeæan songs what Antiquity has disposed them to expect, will at least see that they are ill represented by such puny poetry; and all will determine that if this be the old Theban strain, it is not worthy of revival.

To the disproportion and incongruity of Cowley's sentiments must be added the uncertainty and looseness of his measures. He takes the liberty of using in any place a verse of any length, from two syllables to twelve. The verses of Pindar have, as he observes, very little harmony to a modern ear; yet by examining the syllables we perceive them to be regular, and have reason enough for supposing that the ancient audiences were delighted with the sound. The imitator ought therefore to have adopted what he found, and to have added what was wanting; to have preserved a constant return of the same numbers, and to have supplied smoothness of transition and continuity of thought.

It is urged by Dr. Sprat,<sup>1</sup> that the *irregularity of numbers is the very thing which makes that kind of poesy fit for all manner of subjects*. But he should have remembered, that what is fit for every thing can fit nothing well. The great pleasure of verse arises from the known measure of the lines, and uniform structure of the stanzas, by which the voice is regulated, and the memory relieved.

If the Pindarick style be, what Cowley thinks it, *the highest and noblest kind of writing in verse*,<sup>2</sup> it can be adapted only to high and noble subjects; and it will not be easy to reconcile the poet with the critick, or to conceive how that can be the highest kind of writing in verse, which, according to Sprat, *is chiefly to be preferred for its near affinity to prose*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Cowley*, vol. i. pp. xxi. xxii.

<sup>2</sup> Preface, *Pindaric Odes*, vol. i. p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, vol. i. p. xxii.

This lax and lawless versification so much concealed the deficiencies of the barren, and flattered the laziness of the idle, that it immediately overspread our books of poetry; all the boys and girls caught the pleasing fashion, and they that could do nothing else could write like Pindar. The rights of antiquity were invaded, and disorder tried to break into the Latin: a poem on the Sheldonian Theatre, in which all kinds of verse are shaken together, is unhappily inserted in the "*Musæ Anglicanæ*."<sup>1</sup> Pindarism prevailed above half a century; but at last died gradually away, and other imitations supply its place.

The Pindarique Odes have so long enjoyed the highest degree of poetical reputation, that I am not willing to dismiss them with unabated censure; and surely though the mode of their composition be erroneous, yet many parts deserve at least that admiration which is due to great comprehension of knowledge, and great fertility of fancy. The thoughts are often new, and often striking; but the greatness of one part is disgraced by the littleness of another; and total negligence of language gives the noblest conceptions the appearance of a fabric august in the plan, but mean in the materials. Yet surely those verses are not without a just claim to praise; of which it may be said with truth, that no man but Cowley could have written them.

The Davideis<sup>2</sup> now remains to be considered; a poem which the author designed to have extended to twelve books, merely, as he makes no scruple of declaring, because the *Æneid* had that number; but he had leisure or perseverance only to write the third part.<sup>3</sup> Epick poems

<sup>1</sup> *Carmen Pindaricum in Theatrum Sheldonianum, in solennibus magnifici Operis Encœntis. Recitatum Julii die 9, Anno 1669, a Corbetto. Owen, A. B. Ed. Chr. Alumno Authore, 1669. 4to.*

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. pp. 287-392; vol. ii. pp. 393-537.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Cunningham here remarks that there are four books of the



have been left unfinished by Virgil, Statius, Spenser, and Cowley. That we have not the whole *Davideis* is, however, not much to be regretted; for in this undertaking Cowley is, tacitly at least, confessed to have miscarried. There are not many examples of so great a work, produced by an author generally read, and generally praised, that has crept through a century with so little regard. Whatever is said of Cowley, is meant of his other works. Of the *Davideis* no mention is made; it never appears in books, nor emerges in conversation. By the "*Spectator*" it has once been quoted,<sup>1</sup> by *Rymer* it has once been praised,<sup>2</sup> and by *Dryden*,<sup>3</sup> in "*Mac Flecknoe*," it has once been imitated;<sup>4</sup> nor do I recollect much other notice from its publication till now, in the whole succession of English literature.

Of this silence and neglect, if the reason be inquired, it will be found partly in the choice of the subject, and partly in the performance of the work.

Sacred History has been always read with submissive reverence, and an imagination over-awed and controlled. We have been accustomed to acquiesce in the nakedness and simplicity of the authentick narrative, and to repose on its veracity with such humble confidence, as suppresses curiosity. We go with the historian as he goes, and stop with him when he stops. All amplification is frivolous and vain; all addition to that which is already sufficient for the purposes of religion, seems not only useless, but in some degree profane.

*Davideis*; but this is surely what Johnson means when he states that Cowley only carried out one *third* part of the intended *twelve* books. *Vide infra*, p. 61.

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, No. 81.

<sup>2</sup> In his Preface to Rapin's *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*. *Vide infra*, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> *Mac Flecknoe*. S. S. D. vol. x. p. 448.

<sup>4</sup> This remark does not appear in the first edition of the "*Lives*."

Such events as were produced by the visible interposition of Divine Power are above the power of human genius to dignify. The miracle of Creation, however it may teem with images, is best described with little diffusion of language: *He spake the word, and they were made.*

We are told that Saul *was troubled with an evil spirit* from this Cowley takes an opportunity of describing him and telling the history of Lucifer, who was, he says,

"Once general of a gilded host of sprites,  
Like Hesper leading forth the spangled nights;  
But down like lightning, which him struck, he came,  
And roar'd at his first plunge into the flame."<sup>1</sup>

Lucifer makes a speech to the inferior agents of mischief, in which there is something of heathenism, and therefore of impropriety; and, to give efficacy to his words concludes by lashing *his breast with his long tail.*<sup>2</sup> *En* after a pause, steps out, and among other declarations her zeal utters these lines:

"Do thou but threat, loud storms shall make reply,  
And thunder echo to the trembling sky.  
Whilst raging seas swell to so bold an height,  
As shall the fire's proud element affright.  
Th' old drudging Sun, from his long-beaten way,  
Shall at thy voice start, and misguide the day.  
The jocund orbs shall break their measur'd pace,  
And stubborn Poles change their allotted place.  
Heaven's gilded troops shall flutter here and there,  
Leaving their boasting songs tun'd to a sphere."<sup>3</sup>

Every reader feels himself weary with this useless tale of an allegorical Being.

It is not only when the events are confessedly miraculous

<sup>1</sup> *Davidicis*, Book i. vol. i. p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. vol. i. p. 2

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 296.

at fancy and fiction lose their effect: the whole system of life, while the Theocracy was yet visible, has an appearance so different from all other scenes of human action, that the reader of the Sacred Volume habitually considers it as the peculiar mode of existence of a distinct species of mankind, that lived and acted with manners uncommunicable; so that it is difficult even for imagination to place us in the state of them whose story is related, and by consequence their joys and griefs are not easily adopted, nor can the attention be often interested in any thing that befalls them.

To the subject, thus originally indisposed to the reception of poetical embellishments, the writer brings those that could reconcile impatience, or attract curiosity. Nothing can be more disgusting than a narrative spangled with conceits, and conceits are all that the *Parables* supplies.

One of the great sources of poetical delight is representation, or the power of presenting pictures to the mind. Cowley gives inferences instead of images, and shows not what may be supposed to have been seen, but what through the sight might have suggested. When Virg. describes the stone which Turnus lifted against *Æneas*, he fixes the attention on its bulk and weight:

“*Saxum circumspicit ingens.*”

*Saxum antiquum, ingens, campum quod hinc parietes*

*Limes agro positus, litem at circumspicit æquæ.*”

Cowley says of the stone with which Cain slew his brother,

“I saw him sling the stone, as if to mean  
At once his murder and his monument.”

<sup>1</sup> *Æn.* xii. 896.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn.* xii. 900.

Of the sword taken from Goliah, he says,

"A sword so great, that it was only fit  
To cut off his great head that came with it."<sup>1</sup>

Other poets describe death by some of its common appearances; Cowley says, with a learned allusion to sepulchral lamps real or fabulous,

"Twixt his right ribs deep pierc'd the furious blade,  
And open'd wide those secret vessels where  
Life's light goes out, when first they let in air."<sup>2</sup>

But he has allusions vulgar as well as learned. In a visionary succession of kings:

"Joas at first does bright and glorious show,  
In life's fresh morn his fame does early crow."

Describing an undisciplined army, after having said with elegance,

"His forces seem'd no army, but a crowd  
Heartless, unarm'd, disorderly, and loud;"

he gives them a fit of the ague.

The allusions however are not always to vulgar things: he offends by exaggeration as much as by diminution:

"The king was plac'd alone, and o'er his head  
A well-wrought heaven of silk and gold was spread."

Whatever he writes is always polluted with some conceit:

"Where the sun's fruitful beams give metals birth,  
Where he the growth of fatal gold does see,  
Gold, which alone more influence has than he."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* iii. vol. ii. p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iv. vol. ii. p. 456.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. vol. ii. p. 192.



In one passage he starts a sudden question, to the confusion of philosophy :

"Ye learned heads, whom ivy garlands grace,  
Why does that twining plant the oak embrace ?  
The oak, for courtship most of all unfit,  
And rough as are the winds that fight with it." <sup>1</sup>

His expressions have sometimes a degree of meanness that surpasses expectation :

"Nay, gentle guests, he cries, since now you're in,  
The story of your gallant friend begin."

In a simile descriptive of the Morning :

"As glimmering stars just at th' approach of day,  
Cashier'd by troops, at last drop all away."

The dress of Gabriel deserves attention :

"He took for skin a cloud most soft and bright,  
That e'er the midday sun pierc'd through with light,  
Upon his cheeks a lively blush he spread,  
Wash'd from the morning beauties deepest red;  
An harmless flattering meteor shone for hair;  
And fell adown his shoulders with loose care;  
He cuts out a silk mantle from the skies,  
Where the most sprightly azure pleas'd the eyes;  
This he with starry vapours sprinkles all,  
Took in their prime ere they grow ripe and fall;  
Of a new rainbow, ere it fret or fade,  
The choicest piece cut out, a scarfe is made." <sup>2</sup>

This is a just specimen of Cowley's imagery; what might in general expressions be great and forcible, he weakens and makes ridiculous by branching it into small parts. That Gabriel was invested with the softest or brightest colours of the sky, we might have been told, and been dismissed to improve the idea in our different proportions of

<sup>1</sup> *David*, ii. vol. i. p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, ii. vol. i. p. 353.



conception; but Cowley could not let us go till he had related where Gabriel got first his skin, and then his mantle, then his lace, and then his scarfe, and related it in the terms of the mercer and taylor.

Sometimes he indulges himself in a digression, always conceived with his natural exuberance, and commonly, even where it is not long, continued till it is tedious:

"I th' library a few choice authors stood,  
Yet 'twas well stor'd; for that small store was good;  
Writing, man's spiritual physic, was not then  
Itself, as now, grown a disease of men.  
Learning (young virgin) but few suitors knew;  
The common prostitute she lately grew,  
And with the spurious brood loads now the press;  
Laborious effects of idleness."<sup>1</sup>

As the "Davideis" affords only four books, though intended to consist of twelve, there is no opportunity for such criticisms as Epick poems commonly supply. The plan of the whole work is very imperfectly shewn by the third part. The duration of an unfinished action cannot be known. Of characters either not yet introduced, or shewn but upon few occasions, the full extent and the nice discriminations cannot be ascertained. The fable is plainly implex, formed rather from the "Odyssey" than the "Iliad;" and many artifices of diversification are employed, with the skill of a man acquainted with the best models. The past is recalled by narration, and the future anticipated by vision: but he has been so lavish of his poetical art, that it is difficult to imagine how he could fill eight books more without practising again the same modes of disposing his matter; and perhaps the perception of this growing incumbrance inclined him to stop. By this abruptness, posterity lost more instruction than delight. If the continuation of the "Davideis" can be missed, it is for the learning

<sup>1</sup> *David*. i. vol. i. p. 314.

that had been diffused over it, and the notes in which it had been explained.

Had not his characters been depraved like every other part by improper decorations, they would have deserved uncommon praise. He gives Saul both the body and mind of a hero :

“ His way once chose, he forward thrust outright,  
Nor turn'd aside for danger or delight.”

And the different beauties of the lofty Merah<sup>1</sup> and the gentle Michol<sup>2</sup> are very justly conceived and strongly painted.

Rymer has declared<sup>3</sup> the “Davideis” superior to the “Jerusalem of Tasso,” “which,” says he, “the poet, with all his care, has not totally purged from pedantry.” If by pedantry is meant that minute knowledge which is derived from particular sciences and studies, in opposition to the general notions supplied by a wide survey of life and nature, Cowley certainly errs, by introducing pedantry far more frequently than Tasso. I know not, indeed, why they should be compared; for the resemblance of Cowley’s work to Tasso’s is only that they both exhibit the agency of celestial and infernal spirits, in which however they differ widely; for Cowley supposes them commonly to operate upon the mind by suggestion; Tasso represents them as promoting or obstructing events by external agency.

Of particular passages that can be properly compared, I remember only the description of Heaven, in which the

<sup>1</sup> Merah and Michol are mentioned, 1 Sam. xiv. 49.

<sup>2</sup> The American poet, Bryant, claims to discover in these contrasted types of womanly beauty, the originals of Sir Walter Scott’s Minna and Brenda. The parallel passages are given in Grosart’s C. W. L. 598.—Cowley, part xl. p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Rymer’s Preface to Rapin’s *Reflections on Aristotle’s Treatise of Poessie*. Vide *supra*, p. 57.

different manner of the two writers is sufficiently discernible. Cowley's is scarcely description, unless it be possible to describe by negatives; for he tells us only what there is not in heaven. Tasso endeavours to represent the splendours and pleasures of the regions of happiness. Tasso affords images, and Cowley sentiments. It happens, however, that Tasso's description affords some reason for Rymer's censure. He says of the Supreme Being,

“Hà sotto i piedi e fato e la natura  
Ministri humili, e'l moto, e ch'il misura.”<sup>1</sup>

The second line has in it more of pedantry than perhaps can be found in any other stanza of the poem.

In the perusal of the “Davideis,” as of all Cowley's works, we find wit and learning unprofitably squandered. Attention has no relief; the affections are never moved; we are sometimes surprised, but never delighted, and find much to admire, but little to approve. Still however it is the work of Cowley, of a mind capacious by nature, and replenished by study.

In the general review of Cowley's poetry it will be found, that he wrote with abundant fertility, but negligent or unskilful selection; with much thought, but with little imagery; that he is never pathetick, and rarely sublime, but always either ingenious or learned, either acute or profound.

It is said by Denham in his elegy,

“To him no author was unknown;  
Yet what he writ was all his own.”<sup>2</sup>

This wide position requires less limitation, when it is affirmed of Cowley, than perhaps of any other poet—He read much, and yet borrowed little.

<sup>1</sup> *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, Cant. ix. st. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Poems*, by Sir John Denham, 7th ed. 1769, 12mo. p. 48.



His character of writing was indeed not his own: he, unhappily adopted that which was predominant. He saw a certain way to present praise, and not sufficiently enquiring by what means the ancients have continued to delight through all the changes of human manners, he contented himself with a deciduous laurel, of which the verdure in its spring was bright and gay, but which time has been continually stealing from his brows.

He was in his own time considered as of unrivalled excellence. Clarendon represents him as having taken a flight beyond all that went before him;<sup>1</sup> and Milton is said to have declared, that the three greatest English poets were Spenser, Shakspeare, and Cowley.

His manner he had in common with others: but his sentiments were his own. Upon every subject he thought for himself; and such was his copiousness of knowledge, that something at once remote and applicable rushed into his mind; yet it is not likely that he always rejected a commodious idea merely because another had used it; his known wealth was so great, that he might have borrowed without loss of credit.

In his elegy on Sir Henry Wotton, the last lines have such resemblance to the noble epigram of Grotius<sup>2</sup> upon the death of Scaliger,<sup>3</sup> that I cannot but think them copied from it, though they are copied by no servile hand.

One passage in his "Mistress" is so apparently borrowed from Donne, that he probably would not have written it, had it not mingled with his own thoughts,

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's *Life*, ed. 1827, vol. i. p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Hugo Grotius. "He from whom perhaps every man of learning has learned something." Boswell, vol. iii. p. 157. For an account of Grotius and his famous *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, see Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. ii. p. 541, *vid. inf.* p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the second of four epigrams, *In mortem Scaligeri Epicædia*. Hug. Grot. *Poemata Omnia Epigr.* i. p. 357, Lugdun. Batav. 1617.

so as that he did not perceive himself taking it from another.

“Although I think thou never found wilt be,  
Yet I’m resolv’d to search for thee;  
The search itself rewards the pains.  
So, though the chymic his great secret miss,  
(For neither it in Art nor Nature is)  
Yet things well worth his toil he gains:  
And does his charge and labour pay  
With good unsought experiments by the way.”

COWLEY.<sup>1</sup>

“Some that have deeper digg’d Love’s mine than I,  
Say, where his centric happiness doth lie:  
I have lov’d, and got, and told:  
But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,  
I should not find that hidden mystery:  
Oh, ’tis imposture all:  
And as no chymic yet th’ elixir got,  
But glorifies his pregnant pot.  
If by the way to him befall  
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,  
So lovers dream a rich and long delight,  
But get a winter-seeming summer’s night.”<sup>2</sup>

Jonson and Donne, as Dr. Hurd remarks, were then in the highest esteem.<sup>3</sup>

It is related by Clarendon, that Cowley always acknowledged his obligation to the learning and industry<sup>4</sup> of Jonson; but I have found no traces of Jonson in his works: to emulate Donne, appears to have been his purpose: and from Donne he may have learned that familiarity with religious images, and that light allusion to sacred things, by which readers far short of sanctity are frequently

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 148, *The Mistress*.

<sup>2</sup> Donne’s Poems. *Love’s Alchemy*.

<sup>3</sup> *Select Works of Mr. A. Cowley*, ed. Bp. Hurd, 1717, vol. i. p. 168, note on *Brutus, An Ode*.

<sup>4</sup> “The example and learning.” Clarendon’s *Life*, p. 34, ed. 1827.



offended; and which would not be born in the present age, when devotion, perhaps not more fervent, is more delicate.

Having produced one passage taken by Cowley from Donne, I will recompense him by another which Milton seems to have borrowed from him. He says of Goliath,

"His spear, the trunk was of a lofty tree,  
Which Nature meant some tall ship's mast should be." <sup>1</sup>

Milton of Satan,

"His spear, to equal which the tallest pine  
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast  
Of some great admiral, were but a wand,  
He walk'd with." <sup>2</sup>

His diction was in his own time censured as negligent. He seems not to have known, or not to have considered, that words being arbitrary must owe their power to association, and have the influence, and that only, which custom has given them. Language is the dress of thought; and as the noblest mien, or most graceful action, would be degraded and obscured by a garb appropriated to the gross employment of rusticks or mechanicks, so the most heroick sentiments will lose their efficacy, and the most splendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, debased by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by inelegant applications.

Truth indeed is always truth, and reason is always reason; they have an intrinsick and unalterable value, and constitute that intellectual gold which defies destruction: but gold may be so concealed in baser matter, that only a chymist can recover it; sense may be so hidden in unrefined

<sup>1</sup> *Davidis*, Book iii. vol. ii. p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book. i. line 202. *Ald. M.* vol. i. p. 14.

and plebeian words, that none but philosophers can distinguish it; and both may be so buried in impurities, as not to pay the cost of their extraction.

The diction, being the vehicle of the thoughts, first presents itself to the intellectual eye: and if the first appearance offends, a further knowledge is not often sought. Whatever professes to benefit by pleasing, must please at once. The pleasures of the mind imply something sudden and unexpected; that which elevates must always surprise. What is perceived by slow degrees may gratify us with the consciousness of improvement, but will never strike with the sense of pleasure.

Of all this, Cowley appears to have been without knowledge, or without care. He makes no selection of words, nor seeks any neatness of phrase: he has no elegances either lucky or elaborate; as his endeavours were rather to impress sentences upon the understanding than images on the fancy, he has few epithets, and those scattered without peculiar propriety or nice adaptation. It seems to follow from the necessity of the subject, rather than the care of the writer, that the diction of his heroick poem is less familiar than that of his slightest writings. He has given not the same numbers, but the same diction, to the gentle Anacreon and the tempestuous Pindar.

His versification seems to have had very little of his care; and if what he thinks be true, that his numbers are unmusical only when they are ill read, the art of reading them is at present lost; for they are commonly harsh to modern ears. He has indeed many noble lines, such as the feeble care of Waller never could produce. The bulk of his thoughts sometimes swelled his verse to unexpected and inevitable grandeur; but his excellence of this kind is merely fortuitous: he sinks willingly down to his general carelessness, and avoids with very little care either mean-ness or asperity.

His contractions are often rugged and harsh :

"One flings a mountain, and its rivers too  
Torn up with't."<sup>1</sup>

His rhymes are very often made by pronouns or particles, the like unimportant words, which disappoint the ear, and destroy the energy of the line.

His combination of different measures is sometimes distant and unpleasing; he joins verses together, of which the former does not slide easily into the latter.

The words *do* and *did*, which so much degrade in present diction the line that admits them, were in the time of Cowley little censured or avoided; how often he used them, with how bad an effect, at least to our ears, will appear in the passage, in which every reader will lament to see just such noble thoughts defrauded of their praise by inelegant language :

"Where honour or where conscience *does* not bind,  
No other law shall shackle me;  
Slave to myself I ne'er will be;  
Nor shall my future actions be confin'd  
By my own present mind.  
Who by resolves and vows engag'd *does* stand  
For days, that yet belong to fate,  
*Does* like an unthrift mortgage his estate,  
Before it falls into his hand,  
The bondman of the cloister so,  
All that he *does* receive *does* always owe.  
And still as Time comes in, it goes away,  
Not to enjoy, but debts to pay!  
Unhappy slave, and pupil to a bell!  
Which his hours' work as well as hours *does* tell:  
Unhappy till the last, the kind releasing knell."<sup>2</sup>

His heroick lines are often formed of monosyllables; but they are sometimes sweet and sonorous.

<sup>1</sup>  *Davideis*, Book iii. vol. ii. p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Ode on Liberty*, vol. ii. p. 691.



He says of the Messiah,

"Round the whole earth his dreaded name shall sound,  
And reach to worlds that must not yet be found."<sup>1</sup>

In another place, of David,

"Yet bid him go securely, when he sends;  
'Tis Saul that is his foe, and we his friends.  
The man who has his God, no aid can lack;  
And we who bid him go, will bring him back."<sup>2</sup>

Yet amidst his negligence he sometimes attempted an improved and scientifick versification; of which it will be best to give his own account subjoined to this line,

"Nor can the glory contain itself in th' endless space."<sup>3</sup>

"I am sorry that it is necessary to admonish the most part of readers, that it is not by negligence that this verse is so loose, long, and, as is were, vast; it is to paint in the number the nature of the thing which it describes, which I would have observed in divers other places of this poem, that else will pass for very careless verses: as before,

*'And over-runs the neighb'ring fields with violent course.'*

In the second book;

*'Down a precipice deep, down he casts them all—'*

—And,

*'And fell a-down his shoulders with loose care.'*

In the third,

*'Brass was his helmet, his boots brass, and o'er  
His breast a thick plate of strong brass he wore.'*

In the fourth,

*'Like some fair pine o'er-looking all th' ignobler wood.'*

<sup>1</sup> *Davidis*, Book ii. vol. i. p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Book i. vol. i. p. 304.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 302.

And,

*'Some from the rocks cast themselves down headlong.'*

And many more: but it is enough to instance in a few. The thing is, that the disposition of words and numbers should be such, as that, out of the order and sound of them, the things themselves may be represented. This the Greeks were not so accurate as to bind themselves to; neither have our English poets observed it, for aught I can find. The Latins (*qui musas colunt severiores*) sometimes did it, and their prince, Virgil, always: in whom the examples are innumerable, and taken notice of by all judicious men, so that it is superfluous to collect them."<sup>1</sup>

I know not whether he has, in many of these instances, attained the representation or resemblance that he purposes. Verse can imitate only sound and motion. A boundless verse, a *headlong* verse, and a verse of *brass* or of *strong brass*, seem to comprise very incongruous and unsociable ideas. What there is peculiar in the sound of the line expressing *loose care*, I cannot discover; nor why the *pine* is *taller* in an Alexandrine than in ten syllables.

But, not to defraud him of his due praise, he has given one example of representative versification, which perhaps no other English line can equal:

"Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise.  
He who defers this work from day to day,  
Does on a river's bank expecting stay  
Till the whole stream that stopp'd him shall be gone,  
*Which runs, and as it runs, for ever shall run on.*"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Notes to *Davideis*, vol. i. p. 364, note 25.

<sup>2</sup> "*Sapere aude;*

*Incipe. Qui recte vivendi prorogat horam,  
Rusticus exspectat dum defluat amnis; at ille  
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.*"

Hor. i. 2, 40.

The version in the text is taken from Cowley's Letter *On the Danger of Procrastination*. Works, vol. ii. p. 777.



Cowley was, I believe, the first poet that mingled Alexandrines at pleasure with the common heroick of ten syllables, and from him Dryden borrowed the practice, whether ornamental or licentious. He considered the verse of twelve syllables as elevated and majestick, and has therefore deviated into that measure when he supposes the voice heard of the Supreme Being.

The Author of the "Davideis" is commended by Dryden<sup>1</sup> for having written it in couplets, because he discovered that any staff was too lyrical for an heroick poem; but this seems to have been known before by *May*<sup>2</sup> and *Sandys*,<sup>3</sup> the translators of the "Pharsalia" and "Metamorphoses."

In the "Davideis" are some hemistichs, or verses left imperfect by the author, in imitation of Virgil, whom he supposes not to have intended to complete them: that this opinion is erroneous, may be probably concluded, because this truncation is imitated by no subsequent Roman poet; because Virgil himself filled up one broken line in the heat of recitation; because in one the sense is now unfinished; and because all that can be done by a broken verse, a line intersected by a *cæsura* and a full stop will equally effect.

Of triplets in his "Davideis" he makes no use, and perhaps did not at first think them allowable; but he appears afterwards to have changed his mind, for in the verses on the government of Cromwell he inserts them liberally with great happiness.

After so much criticism on his "Poems," the "Essays" which accompany them must not be forgotten. What is said by Sprat<sup>4</sup> of his conversation, that no man could draw

<sup>1</sup> *Ded. Æneid.*

<sup>2</sup> Lucan's *Pharsalia*. The whole ten books Englished by Thomas May, Esq. Lond. 1627. 12mo.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Englished by George Sandys, 1621. 16mo. 1626, folio.

<sup>4</sup> *Cowley's Works*, vol. i. p. xxxv.

on it any suspicion of his excellence in poetry, may be applied to these compositions. No author ever kept his verse and his prose at a greater distance from each other. His thoughts are natural, and his style has a smooth and rapid equability, which has never yet obtained its due commendation. Nothing is far-sought, or hard-laboured; but all is easy without feebleness, and familiar without coarseness.

It has been observed by Felton,<sup>1</sup> in his "Essay on the Classics," that Cowley was beloved by every Muse that he courted; and that he has rivalled the Ancients in every kind of poetry but tragedy.

It may be affirmed, without any encomiastick fervour, that he brought to his poetick labours a mind replete with learning, and that his pages are embellished with all the ornaments which books could supply; that he was the first who imparted to English numbers the enthusiasm of the greater ode, and the gaiety of the less;<sup>2</sup> that he was equally qualified for spritely sallies, and for lofty flights; that he was among those who freed translation from servility, and, instead of following his author at a distance, walked by his side; and that if he left versification yet improvable, he left room for time to time such specimens of excellence as enabled succeeding poets to improve it.

<sup>1</sup> "A Dissertation on reading the Classics and forming a just Style." 1711, p. 26, by Henry Felton, D.D. (1679-1740), Principal of Edmund's Hall, Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam, in quoting this whole paragraph in his notice of Cowley, as "very discriminating, elaborate, and well expressed," here has the note, "Was not Milton's 'Ode on the Nativity' written as early as any of Cowley's? And would Johnson have thought Cowley superior in gaiety to Sir John Suckling?" *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 34.



DENHAM.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

[Editions of Denham's *Poems and Translations* with *The Sophy*, were published in 1667-8, 1671, 1684, 1698 (Gildon's), and with the addition of *Cato Major* in 1703, 1709, and 1769. Specimens of his Poems are now accessible in Ward's *Eng. Poets*, vol. ii. p. 281.

The references in this Life have been made to the 7th ed. 1769. The date of matriculation is from the College books.

Important information has been gathered as to the money mentioned by Johnson (p. 80) as brought by Denham from Poland for the king; and original documents and other interesting matter, on the subject of the Scots in Poland, will be found in the appendix to this volume.]



## DENHAM.

OF Sir John Denham very little is known but what is related of him by Wood,<sup>1</sup> or by himself.

He was born at Dublin in 1615; the only son of Sir John Denham, of Little Horksely in Essex, then chief baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, and of Eleanor, daughter of Sir Garrett More baron of Mellefont.

Two years afterwards, his father, being made one of the barons of the Exchequer in England, brought him away from his native country, and educated him in London.

In 1631 he was sent to Oxford,<sup>2</sup> where he was considered "as a dreaming young man,"<sup>3</sup> given more to dice and cards than study; and therefore gave no prognosticks of his future eminence; nor was suspected to conceal, under sluggishness and laxity, a genius born to improve the literature of his country.

When he was, three years afterwards, removed to Lincoln's Inn, he prosecuted the common law with sufficient appearance of application; yet did not lose his propensity to cards and dice; but was very often plundered by gamblers.

Being severely reprov'd for this folly, he profess'd, and

<sup>1</sup> Wood, ed. Bliss, 1817, vol. iii. p. 823.

<sup>2</sup> Denham matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford, Nov. 18, 1631, aged 16.

<sup>3</sup> "I have heard Mr. Jno. Home say that he was the dreamingest young fellow: he never expected such things from him as he hath left the world." Aubrey's *Lives*, vol. ii. p. 316.

He was yet engaged in a greater undertaking. In April 1648, he conveyed James the duke of York from London into France, and delivered him there to the Queen's prince of Wales. This year he published his translation of "Cato Major."<sup>1</sup>

He now resided in France, as one of the followers of the exiled King; and, to divert the melancholy of this condition, was sometimes enjoined by his master to write occasional verses; one of which amusements was probably his ode or song<sup>2</sup> upon the Embassy to Poland, by which he and Lord Crofts procured a contribution<sup>3</sup> of ten thousand pounds from the Scotch, that wandered over that kingdom. Poland was at that time very much frequented by itinerant traders, who, in a country of very little commerce and great extent, where every man resided on his own estate, contributed very much to the accommodation of life, bringing to every man's house those little necessities which it was very inconvenient to want, and very troublesome to fetch. I have formerly read, without much reflection, of the multitude of Scotchmen that travelled with their wares in Poland;<sup>4</sup> and that their numbers were

<sup>1</sup> *Poems*, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> *On my Lord Crofts and my journey into Poland, from whence I brought £10,000 for His Majesty, by the Decimation of his Scotch subjects there.* *Poems*, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> This was not a contribution or voluntary offering, but the price of an oppressive tax levied on the English and Scotch settlers in Poland by order of the Diet, December 5th, 1650. The decree itself, extracted from the *Volamina Legum* at Warsaw, by the kindness of the learned Dr. Isidor Kopernicki of Cracow, will be found in Appendix B, and other documents showing how rigidly it was enforced.

Of the £10,000 obtained by this "decimation," it is said that little reached the King. We learn from Clarendon (*Hist. Rebell.* v.) that, large sums being given to the Queen, Lord Jermyn and Dr. (under pretence of debts due to them, when the King returned in disguise to Paris, he did not receive so much as 500 pistoles from this fund.

<sup>4</sup> The number of Scotch settlers in Poland was extraordinary.

small, the success of this negotiation gives sufficient evidence.

About this time, what estate the war and the gamesters had left him was sold, by order of the parliament; and when, in 1652, he returned to England, he was entertained by the earl of Pembroke.

Of the next years of his life there is no account. At the Restoration he obtained, that which many missed, the reward of his loyalty; being made surveyor of the king's buildings,<sup>1</sup> and dignified with the order of the Bath. He seems now to have learned some attention to money; for Wood says, that he got by his place seven thousand pounds.

After the Restoration he wrote the poem on Prudence and Justice,<sup>2</sup> and perhaps some of his other pieces: and as he appears, whenever any serious question comes before

John Skene in 1569 saw "ane multitude" of "Scottesmen" in Cracow. (See his definition of *pedder* or *pedlar* in his work *De Verborum Significatione*). Lithgow, the traveller, in 1619, found "30,000 Scotch families incorporated in her bowels" (*Travels and Voyages, &c. &c.* by William Lithgow, 12th edition, 1814, pp. 334-336), beside the yearly influx of "young boys and maids unable for any service," which was so great as to call forth a letter of remonstrance to James VI. in 1624 from his Scottish subjects in Dantzic. (*Maidment's Letters, &c.* cccv. Edinburgh, 1838.) Lithgow (a Scotsman) remarks that "certainly Poland may be termed the mother of our commons, and the first commencement of all our best merchants' wealth, or at least most part of them," a statement corroborated by the records of many a Scotch family. See Appendix C. for a few notes in elucidation of this curious subject, which remains as much a problem as when Bacon in his great speech (*Works of Lord Bacon*, Lond. 1765, ii. 175) on Naturalization pointed out that "some special accidents of time and place" must have led the Scots to prefer Poland to France and Germany, countries so much more accessible, and to which they were invited with many privileges.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cunningham gives the date of the patent June 13th, 1660. Sir John Denham succeeded Inigo Jones as surveyor of buildings. Aubrey states that Sir Christopher Wren was his deputy. Aubrey's *Lives*, vol. ii, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> These two poems *Prudence* and *Justice* are translations. Denham, in



him, to have been a man of piety, he consecrated his poetical powers to religion, and made a metrical version of the psalms of David. In this attempt he has failed; but, in sacred poetry who has succeeded?

It might be hoped that the favour of his master and esteem of the publick would now make him happy. But human felicity is short and uncertain; a second<sup>1</sup> marriage brought upon him so much disquiet, as for a time disordered his understanding; and Butler<sup>2</sup> lampooned him for his lunacy. I know not whether the malignant lines were then made publick, nor what provocation incited Butler to do that which no provocation can excuse.

His frenzy lasted not long; and he seems to have regained his full force of mind;<sup>3</sup> for he wrote afterwards his excellent poem upon the death of Cowley,<sup>4</sup> whom he was

his preface to them, states that "the Author was a Person of Quality in Italy, his name Mancini, which family matched since with a sister of Cardinal Mazarine; he was cotemporary to Petrarch and Mantuan, and not long before Torquato Tasso." Denham pleasantly describes his lighting accidentally on the Latin version when "waiting upon an Ancient and Honourable friend" on his way "last summer to visit the Wells." *Poems*, pp. 78, 79, 87.

<sup>1</sup> "He married Miss Brooke. See *Memoirs of Grammont*."—MS. note by Sir E. Brydges, in his copy of the *Lives of the Poets*, now in the British Museum. On the sudden and mysterious death of Lady Denham in 1666-7, Sir John sold his great house, the original Burlington House, which had been built by him in 1664.

<sup>2</sup> In *A panegyric upon Sir John Denham's recovery from his madness*. Ald. Butler, vol. ii. p. 169. This was published, after Butler's death, in Thyers' *Genuine Remains*, vol. i. p. 55, ed. 1759.

<sup>3</sup> His madness is said to have arisen through the misconduct of his second wife by Aubrey (*Lives*, vol. ii. p. 319), who also describes Denham's appearance, as very tall, not very robust, "His eie was a kind of goose-grey, not big, but it had a strange piercingness; when he conversed with you he look't into your very thoughts." p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> Published Aug. 1667.

not long to survive; for on the 19th of March, 1668, he was buried by his side.

Denham is deservedly considered as one of the fathers of English poetry. "Denham and Waller," says Prior,<sup>1</sup> "improved our versification, and Dryden perfected it." He has given specimens of various composition, descriptive, ludicrous, didactic, and sublime.

He appears to have had, in common with almost all mankind, the ambition of being upon proper occasions *a merry fellow*, and in common with most of them to have been by nature, or by early habits, debarred from it. Nothing is less exhilarating than the ludicrousness of Denham. He does not fail for want of efforts: he is familiar, he is gross; but he is never merry, unless the "Speech against peace in the close Committee"<sup>2</sup> be excepted. For grave burlesque, however, his imitation of Davenant<sup>3</sup> shews him to have been well qualified.

Of his more elevated occasional poems there is perhaps none that does not deserve commendation. In the verses to Fletcher, we have an image that has since been often adopted:

"But whither am I stray'd? I need not raise  
Trophies to thee from other mens dispraise;  
Nor is thy fame on lesser ruins built,  
Nor need thy juster title the foul guilt  
Of eastern kings, who, to secure their reign,  
Must have their brothers, sons, and kindred slain."<sup>4</sup>

After Denham, Orrery, in one of his prologues,

<sup>1</sup> Prior says, "As Davenant and Waller corrected, and Dryden perfected it, it is," &c. &c. Preface to *Solomon on the Vanity of the World*. Poems, vol. ii. p. 84, Aldine Prior.

<sup>2</sup> Poems, p. 51, 7th ed. Lond. 1769.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson refers to *An occasional imitation of a modern author upon the game of chess*. See Poems, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Poems, p. 63.



"Poets are sultans, if they had their will;  
For every author would his brother kill."<sup>1</sup>

And Pope,

"Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,  
Bear like the Turk no brother near the throne."<sup>2</sup>

But this is not the best of his little pieces: it is excelled by his poem<sup>3</sup> to Fanshaw, and his elegy on Cowley.<sup>4</sup>

His praise of Fanshaw's<sup>5</sup> version of Guarini, contains a very spritely and judicious character of a good translator:

"That servile path thou nobly dost decline,  
Of tracing word by word, and line by line.  
Those are the labour'd births of slavish brains,  
Not the effect of poetry, but pains;  
Cheap vulgar arts, whose narrowness affords  
No flight for thoughts, but poorly stick at words.  
A new and nobler way thou dost pursue,  
To make translations and translators too.  
They but preserve the ashes, thou the flame,  
True to his sense, but truer to his fame."<sup>6</sup>

The excellence of these lines is greater, as the truth which they contain was not at that time generally known.

His poem on the death of Cowley was his last, and, among his shorter works, his best performance: the numbers are musical, and the thoughts are just.

"Cooper's Hill"<sup>7</sup> is the work that confers upon him the

<sup>1</sup> "They would be Sultans, if they had their will,  
For each of them would all his Brothers kill."

Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, *Dramatic Works*, ed. 1739, vol. i. p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> From the character of Addison in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, Pope's Works, vol. iii. p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Poems*, p. 64, pub. 1647, shortly after Fanshawe's translation.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) Fanshawe (1608-1666), published in 1647 a translation of the *Il Pastor Fido* of Baptista Guarini.

<sup>6</sup> *Poems*, p. 65.

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Gosse points out that *Cooper's Hill* had been preceded by Ben Jonson's *Penshurst*. Ward's *Select English Poets*, vol. ii. p. 280.

rank and dignity of an original author. He seems to have been, at least among us, the author of a species of composition that may be denominated *local poetry*, of which the fundamental subject is some particular landscape, to be poetically described, with the addition of such embellishments as may be supplied by historical retrospection, or incidental meditation.

To trace a new scheme of poetry has in itself a very high claim to praise, and its praise is yet more when it is apparently copied by Garth<sup>1</sup> and Pope;<sup>2</sup> after whose names little will be gained by an enumeration of smaller poets, that have left scarce a corner of the island not dignified either by rhyme, or blank verse.

"Cooper's Hill," if it be maliciously inspected, will not be found without its faults. The digressions are too long, the morality too frequent, and the sentiments sometimes such as will not bear a rigorous enquiry.

The four verses, which, since Dryden has commended them, almost every writer for a century past has imitated, are generally known:

"O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream  
My great example, as it is my theme!  
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;  
Strong without rage, without o'er-flowing full."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Garth, Sir Samuel, poet and physician, died January 1718-9. The poem in which he "copied" *Cooper's Hill* was *Claremont*, describing a villa of the Duke of Newcastle's. "He is honourably remembered for providing suitable interment for the shamefully abandoned corpse of Dryden." *Chalmer's Biog. Dict. Vid. infr.* vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> In *Windsor Forest*. Pope, *Poems*, vol. i. p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Poems*, p. 7. Hallam (*Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 31) quotes Johnson's remarks on this verse with the note: "Perhaps these metaphors are so naturally applied to style, that no language of a cultivated people is without them. But the ground of objection is, in fact, that the lines contain nothing but wit, and that wit turns on a play of words. They are rather ingenious in this respect, and remarkably harmonious, which

The lines are in themselves not perfect; for most of words, thus artfully opposed, are to be understood singly on one side of the comparison, and metaphorically on the other; and if there be any language which does not express intellectual operations by material images, into that language they cannot be translated. But so much measure is comprised in so few words; the particulars of resemblance are so perspicaciously collected, and every minor excellence separated from its adjacent fault by so narrow a line of limitation; the different parts of the sentence so accurately adjusted; and the flow of the last couplet so smooth and sweet; that the passage, however celebrated, has not been praised above its merit. It has beauty peculiar to itself, and must be numbered among those felicities which cannot be produced at will by wit and labour, but must arise unexpectedly in some hour propitious to poetry.

He appears to have been one of the first that understood the necessity of emancipating translation from the drudgery of counting lines and interpreting single words. As much this servile practice obscured the clearest and deformed the most beautiful parts of the ancient authors, may be discovered by a perusal of our earlier versions. Some of them the works of men well qualified, not only in critical knowledge, but by poetical genius, who yet, by mistaken ambition of exactness, degraded at once the originals and themselves.

Denham saw the better way, but has not pursued it to great success. His versions of Virgil are not pleasing, but they taught Dryden to please better. His poem in imitation of Tully on "Old Age"<sup>1</sup> has neither the clearness of prose, nor the spriteliness of poetry.

The "strength of Denham," which Pope so emphatically praises, is probably the secret of their popularity; but, as poetry, they deserve no great praise."

<sup>1</sup> *Cato Major, of Old Age*, Denham's *Poems*, p. 100.



entions,<sup>1</sup> is to be found in many lines and couplets, which convey much meaning in few words, and exhibit the sentiment with more weight than bulk.

#### On the Thames.

"Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,  
Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold;  
His genuine and less guilty wealth t'explore,  
Search not his bottom, but survey his shore."<sup>2</sup>

#### On Strafford.

"His wisdom such, at once it did appear  
Three kingdoms wonder, and three kingdoms fear;  
While single he stood forth, and seem'd, although  
Each had an army, as an equal foe.  
Such was his force of eloquence, to make  
The hearers more concern'd than he that spake;  
Each seem'd to act that part he came to see,  
And none was more a looker on than he;  
So did he move our passions, some were known  
To wish, for the defence, the crime their own.  
Now private pity strove with publick hate,  
Reason with rage, and eloquence with fate."<sup>3</sup>

#### On Cowley.

"To him no author was unknown,  
Yet what he wrote was all his own;  
Horace's wit, and Virgil's state,  
He did not steal, but emulate!  
And when he would like them appear,  
Their garb, but not their cloaths, did wear."<sup>4</sup>

As one of Denham's principal claims to the regard of posterity arises from his improvement of our numbers, his versification ought to be considered. It will afford that

<sup>1</sup> Pope, *Essay on Criticism*. *Poems*, vol. ii. p. 17 :—

"And praise the easy vigour of a line  
Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join."

<sup>2</sup> *Poems*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

pleasure which arises from the observation of a man of judgement naturally right forsaking bad copies by degrees, and advancing towards a better practice, as he gains more confidence in himself.

In his translation of Virgil,<sup>1</sup> written when he was about twenty-one years old, may be still found the old manner of continuing the sense ungracefully from verse to verse.

“ Then all those

Who in the dark our fury did escape,  
Returning, know our borrow'd arms, and shape,  
And differing dialect: then their numbers swell  
And grow upon us; first Choroëbus fell  
Before Minerva's altar; next did bleed  
Just Ripheus, whom no Trojan did exceed }  
In virtue, yet the gods his fate decreed. }  
Then Hypanis and Dymas, wounded by  
Their friends; nor thee, Pantheus, thy piety,  
Nor consecrated mitre, from the same  
Ill fate could save; my country's funeral flame  
And Troy's cold ashes I attest, and call  
To witness for myself, that in their fall  
No foes, no death, nor danger I declin'd,  
Did, and deserv'd no less, my fate to find.”<sup>2</sup>

From this kind of concatenated metre he afterwards refrained, and taught his followers the art of concluding their sense in couplets; which has perhaps been with rather too much constancy pursued.

This passage exhibits one of those triplets which are not infrequent in this first essay, but which it is to be supposed his maturer judgement disapproved, since in his latter works he has totally forborn them.

His rhymes are such as seem found without difficulty, by following the sense; and are for the most part as exact at least as those of other poets, though now and then the reader is shifted off with what he can get.

<sup>1</sup> *An Essay on the Second Book of Virgil's Æneis, written in the year 1636, p. 15.*

<sup>2</sup> *Poems, p. 28.*



"O how transform'd!  
How much unlike that Hector, who return'd  
Clad in Achilles' spoils!"<sup>1</sup>

and again,

"From thence a thousand lesser poets *spring*,  
Like petty princes from the fall of *Rome*."<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes the weight of rhyme is laid upon a word too feeble to sustain it:

"Troy confounded falls  
From all her glories: if it might have stood  
By any power, by this right hand it *shou'd*."<sup>3</sup>

"—And though my outward state misfortune *hath*  
Deprest thus low, it cannot reach my faith."<sup>4</sup>

"—Thus by his fraud and our own faith o'ercome,  
A feigned tear destroys us, against *whom*  
Tydides nor Achilles could prevail,  
Nor ten years conflict, nor a thousand sail."<sup>5</sup>

He is not very careful to vary the ends of his verses: in one passage the word *die* rhimes three couplets in six.

Most of these petty faults are in his first productions, when he was less skilful, or at least less dexterous in the use of words; and though they had been more frequent, they could only have lessened the grace, not the strength of his composition. He is one of the writers that improved our taste,<sup>6</sup> and advanced our language, and whom we ought therefore to read with gratitude, though, having done much, he left much to do.

<sup>1</sup> *Poems*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> See Hallam (*Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. pp. 30, 31) on the characteristics of Denham's style.



MILTON.

## PREFATORY NOTE

[So numerous have been the editions of Milton's Poems since Tonson first published his fine f<sup>olio</sup> by subscription in 1688, that it is impossible here to do more than refer to the copious lists of editions given by Todd in his standard "variorum" edition of Milton's Poetical Works, published in 1801, and in Lowndes's *Bib. Man.* To most of these editions a Life of the Poet was prefixed, but, though extremely useful, these Lives were only short summaries of facts, and the fitting Biography was "yet a desideratum in our literature" when Prof. David Masson, in 1859-81, brought out his *Life of John Milton, narrated in connexion with the Political, Ecclesiastical and Literary History of his Time*. This exhaustive and delightful work is constantly referred to in our notes under the contraction M.M., and it is to be observed that where vol. i. is mentioned it is always the ed. 1881 which is intended, that volume alone having been republished with many additions and corrections. References to the poems are made to the *Miltons* in the *Aldine Edition* of the British Poets, contracted Ald. M. The Boswell's *Johnson* used is Napier's edition, 1884. *Milton's Life* by Philips is referred to in Godwin's *Lives of E. and J. Philips*.]

## MILTON.

THE Life of Milton has been already written in so many forms, and with such minute enquiry, that I might perhaps more properly have contented myself with the addition of a few notes to Mr. Fenton's elegant Abridgement,<sup>1</sup> but that a new narrative was thought necessary to the uniformity of this edition.<sup>2</sup>

John Milton was by birth a gentleman,<sup>3</sup> descended from the proprietors of Milton near Thame in Oxfordshire, one of whom forfeited his estate in the times of York and Lancaster. Which side he took I know not; his descendant inherited no veneration for the White Rose.

His grandfather John was keeper of the forest of Shotover,<sup>4</sup> a zealous papist, who disinherited his son, because he had forsaken the religion of his ancestors.

His father, John, who was the son disinherited, had recourse for his support to the profession of a scrivener. He was a man eminent for his skill in musick, many of his compositions being still to be found;<sup>5</sup> and his reputa-

<sup>1</sup> Prefixed to his edition of Milton's *Poetical Works*, Lond. 1727, 8vo, two vols. *Vid. infr. Life of Fenton*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> See Boswell on Johnson's *Life of Milton*, and Various Readings in the same. Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iv. pp. 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> All that Milton himself said of his genealogy was that he came of an honest or honourable stock ("*genere honesto*"). *M. M.* vol. i. p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> The name and occupation of Milton's grandfather are uncertain, but of this religious zeal there is no doubt.

<sup>5</sup> In the collection of madrigals, entitled *The Triumphes of Oriana*,



tion in his profession was such, that he grew rich, and retired to an estate. He had probably more than common literature, as his son addresses him in one of his most elaborate Latin poems.<sup>1</sup> He married a gentlewoman of the name of Caston,<sup>2</sup> a Welsh family, by whom he had two sons, John the poet, and Christopher<sup>3</sup> who studied the law, and adhered, as the law taught him, to the King's party, for which he was a while persecuted; but having, by his brother's interest, obtained permission to live in quiet, he supported himself so honourably by chamber-practice, that soon after the accession of King James, he was knighted and made a Judge; but, his constitution being too weak for business, he retired before any disreputable compliances became necessary.

He had likewise a daughter Anne, whom he married with a considerable fortune to Edward Philips, who came from Shrewsbury, and rose in the Crown-office<sup>4</sup> to be secondary: by him she had two sons, John and Edward, who were educated by the poet, and from whom is derived<sup>5</sup> the only authentick account of his domestick manners.

John, the poet, was born in his father's house, at the

one is by him, and two well-known Psalm tunes, *Norwich* and *York*, are of his composition.

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Patrem*, Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Chester's discoveries make it certain that Milton's father married early in 1600 Sarah Jeffraye daughter of Mrs. Ellen Jeffraye, who being then a widow resided with her son-in-law till her death in 1610. M. M. vol. i. pp. 33-39.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Milton (1615-1693) was made one of the Barons of the Exchequer, April 26th, 1686. See Macaulay's *Hist. Eng.* vol. i. p. 357, ed. 1864.

<sup>4</sup> This was a Government office in Chancery.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Life of Milton*, by Edward Philips, 1694, originally prefixed to a translation of the *Letters of State*, now most accessible in *Godwin's Lives of E. and J. Philips*, p. 350.

"Spread-Eagle"<sup>1</sup> in Bread-street, Dec. 9, 1608, between six and seven in the morning. His father appears to have been very solicitous about his education; for he was instructed at first by private tuition under the care of Thomas Young,<sup>2</sup> who was afterwards chaplain to the English merchants at Hamburgh; and of whom we have reason to think well, since his scholar considered him as worthy of an epistolary Elegy.

He was then sent to St. Paul's School, under the care of Mr. Gill;<sup>3</sup> and removed in the beginning of his sixteenth year, to Christ's College in Cambridge, where he entered a sizar,<sup>4</sup> Feb. 12, 1624 (O.S.).

He was at this time eminently skilled in the Latin tongue; and he himself, by annexing the dates to his first compositions, a boast of which the learned "Politian"<sup>5</sup> had given him an example, seems to commend the earliness of his own proficiency to the notice of posterity. But the products of his vernal fertility have been surpassed by

<sup>1</sup> The eagle with outstretched wings was not only the sign fixed over the scrivener's shop, but formed part of the armorial bearings of the family, and appeared on the seals used by Milton. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Young, to whom Milton's fourth elegy was addressed, was a Scotch Puritan divine from St. Andrew's. He was, about 1622, chaplain to the English merchants in Hamburg, afterwards Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, and, finally, vicar of Stowmarket in Suffolk, where he died.

<sup>3</sup> The two Alexander Gills, father and son, were respectively head master and under-master of St. Paul's School at the time of Milton's education. See *M. M.* vol. i. p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> The college entry-book, however, shows that Milton was "admitted a lesser-pensioner," that is to say, on the same footing as the bulk of the students.

<sup>5</sup> Politian (1454-1494), the friend of Lorenzo de' Medici, and tutor to his children, was one of the leaders of the Italian Renaissance. His Latin poems were famous, and have been repeatedly printed. *Matt. Arnold, Select Lives, &c.* p. 457. One of the first literary proposals made by Johnson was for an edition of the Latin poems of Politian, with notes on modern Latin verse. *Boswell's Johnson*, vol. i. p. 54.

many, and particularly by his contemporary Cowley.<sup>1</sup> Of the powers of the mind it is difficult to form an estimate: many have excelled Milton in their first essays, who never rose to works like "Paradise Lost."

At fifteen, a date which he uses till he is sixteen, he translated or versified two Psalms, 114 and 136,<sup>2</sup> which he thought worthy of the publick eye; but they raise no great expectations; they would in any numerous school have obtained praise, but not excited wonder.

Many of his elegies appear to have been written in his eighteenth year, by which it appears that he had then read the Roman authors with very nice discernment. I once heard Mr. Hampton,<sup>3</sup> the translator of "Polybius," remark what I think is true, that Milton was the first Englishman who, after the revival of letters, wrote Latin verses with classick elegance.<sup>4</sup> If any exceptions can be made, they are very few: Haddon and Ascham, the pride of Elizabeth's reign,<sup>5</sup> however they may have succeeded in prose, no sooner attempt verses than they provoke derision. If we produced anything worthy of notice be-

<sup>1</sup> Cowley's *Poetical Blossoms* were published in his fifteenth year (1633).

<sup>2</sup> *Ald. M.* vol. iii. pp. 245, 246.

<sup>3</sup> James Hampton, of Christ's Church College, Oxford, the translator of Polybius, "as remarkable for his brutal disposition as for his good scholarship." See anecdote of his violent temper in a letter from Gilbert White, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1781.

<sup>4</sup> See Pattison's *Milton*, p. 41, and Landor's Works, vol. iv. pp. 517-525, on Milton's Latin poems.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Haddon, LL.D. (1516-1572). For a list of his works, see Lowndes, who adds that, Queen Elizabeth being asked whether she preferred Haddon or Buchanan as men of learning, she replied, "Buchananum omnibus antepono, Haddonum nemini postpono." He was Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge, then President of Magdalen College, Oxford, afterwards Envoy to the Netherlands.

Roger Ascham (1515-1568), author of the *Scholemaster*, *Toxophilus*, *The Schole of Shootinge*, and many Latin works.



fore the elegies of Milton, it was perhaps Alabaster's "*Roxana*."<sup>1</sup>

Of these exercises which the rules of the University required, some were published by him in his maturer years. They had been undoubtedly applauded; for they were such as few can perform: yet there is reason to suspect that he was regarded in his college with no great fondness.<sup>2</sup> That he obtained no fellowship is certain; but the unkindness with which he was treated was not merely negative. I am ashamed to relate what I fear is true, that Milton was one of the last students in either university that suffered the public indignity of corporal correction.

It was, in the violence of controversial hostility, objected to him, that he was expelled: this he steadily denies, and it was apparently not true; but it seems plain from his own verses to Diodati,<sup>3</sup> that he had incurred Rustication; a temporary dismission into the country, with perhaps the loss of a term:<sup>4</sup>

"Me tenet urbs refluâ quam Thamesis alluit undâ,  
 Meque nec invitum patria dulcis habet.  
 Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura revisere Camum,  
 Nec dudum *vetiti* me *laris* angit amor.—  
 Nec duri libet usque minas perferre magistri,  
 Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo.  
 Si sit hoc *exilium* patrias adiisse penates,  
 Et vacuum curis otia grata sequi,

<sup>1</sup> *Roxana Tragedia a Plagiarii Unguibus vindicta, aucta et recognita ab Authore.* Lond. 1632. This tragedy was acted in the hall of Trinity College, Cambridge, in Elizabeth's reign. Mr. William Alabaster (1567-1640) was an English scholar and divine. For a comparison of his Latin poems with those of May and Milton, see Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 54, ed. 1843.

<sup>2</sup> See *M. M.* ed. 1881, vol. i. pp. 159-161.

<sup>3</sup> *M. M.* vol. i. pp. 98-102. *Ald. M.* vol. iii. p. 256.

<sup>4</sup> It is certain that Milton did not lose a term. On this and the "corporal correction," see *M. M.* vol. i. pp. 159-167.

Non ego vel *profugi* nomen sortemve recuso,  
Lætus et *exilii* conditione fruor."<sup>1</sup>

I cannot find any meaning but this, which even kindness and reverence can give to the term, *retiti laris*, "a habitation from which he is excluded;" or how *exile* can be otherwise interpreted. He declares yet more, that he is weary of enduring *the threats of a rigorous master, and something else, which a temper like his cannot undergo*. What was more than threat was probably punishment. This poem, which mentions his *exile*, proves likewise that it was not perpetual; for it concludes with a resolution of returning some time to Cambridge. And it may be conjectured from the willingness with which he has perpetuated the memory of his exile, that its cause was such as gave him no shame.<sup>2</sup>

He took both the usual degrees; that of Batchelor in 1628, and that of Master in 1632;<sup>3</sup> but he left the university with no kindness for its institution, alienated either by the injudicious severity of his governors, or his own captious perverseness. The cause cannot now be known, but the effect appears in his writings. His scheme of education,<sup>4</sup> inscribed to Hartlib, supersedes all academical

<sup>1</sup> This poem is a reply in Latin Elegiacs to a Greek letter from Milton's intimate friend Charles Diodati (*vid. infr.* p. 107, n. 3). See Masson's charming version of it, vol. i. p. 164-166.

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is an addition made by Johnson in the edition (1783) from which our text is printed.

<sup>3</sup> In this year appeared his first printed performance, his epitaph on Shakespeare prefixed to the folio (known as the 2nd Folio) of 1632. P. Cunningham, vol. i. p. 85. Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> *Letter to Master Hartlib on Education*, 1644, 4to. reprinted and published by Milton himself in 1673, with his Poems. Samuel Hartlib (dates of birth and death unknown) was the son of a Polish merchant settled in Prussia, a learned and excellent philanthropist or friend of progress. He came to England about 1640, and devoted himself to every scheme for furthering the public good, and among others to those for "the schooling and education of children." He published a long



instruction, being intended to continue the study of the  
which men usually regard as necessary, with the addition  
upon grammar till they proceed to the study of the  
arts, and in his Discourse on the Education of the  
Removes Fireings out of the University of the  
poses, that the profits of the study should be the  
expectations (and, indeed, the only ones) of the  
over the mind, which should be the only one  
together, so that youth shall be able to do  
competency of estimation and the whole of the  
such of them as will be the first, which should be the  
elaborate (and, indeed, the only) of the  
former, become worthy products.

One of his objections to academic education, as it was  
then constituted, is that men destined for public service  
Church were permitted to amuse themselves with the  
their clergy (and, indeed, the only) of the  
Trinitas, Infants and other, and, indeed, the only

series of works in education, and is the result of the  
new ideas in that subject, in which a great many  
compilation of the views of Immanuel, that great man being  
London. One of the most famous subjects was agriculture, and he  
he made many experiments, and in which he published some  
works. His collection of rare manuscripts was well known.

<sup>1</sup> Published 1453. See M. M. vol. i. p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> During the first visit of King James to Cambridge in 1606, ten  
plays were acted on four successive nights, one of which, the  
comedy *Ignoramus* by George Ruggle, M.A. a Fellow of Clare, was so  
successful, that although it occupied six hours in the acting, the King  
was so pleased with it, that he made a second visit to Cambridge to  
see it again. Another comedy acted with great success was *John  
Honest* (Honest Fraud). Specimens of this wretched trash are given,  
M. M. vol. i. pp. 221-224. The actors were the students, masters of  
arts, and fellows. The place of performance was the Great Hall of  
Trinity, which could be fitted up to accommodate 2,000 persons. The  
last play acted at either university is said to have been *The Gleanings  
of the Field*, by Christopher Smart, at Pembroke College, Cambridge, about  
1747.

ministry which they had, or were near having, to the eyes of courtiers and court-ladies, their grooms and mademoiselles.<sup>1</sup>

This is sufficiently peevish in a man, who, when he mentions his exile from the college, relates, with great luxuriance, the compensation which the pleasures of the theatre afford him.<sup>2</sup> Plays were therefore only criminal when they were acted by academicks.

He went to the university with a design of entering into the church, but in time altered his mind; for he declared, that whoever became a clergyman must "subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that could retch, he must straight perjure himself. He thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing."<sup>3</sup>

These expressions are, I find, applied to the subscription of the articles; but it seems more probable that they relate to canonical obedience. I know not any of the Articles which seem to thwart his opinions: but the thoughts of obedience, whether canonical or civil, raised his indignation.

His unwillingness to engage in the ministry, perhaps not yet advanced to a settled resolution of declining it, appears in a letter to one of his friends,<sup>4</sup> who had reproved his suspended and dilatory life, which he seems to have imputed to an insatiable curiosity, and fantastick luxury of various knowledge. To this he writes a cool and plausible answer, in which he endeavors to persuade him that the

<sup>1</sup> *Apology for Smectymnus*, 1642. M. M. vol. ii. p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> *First Elegy*, lines 26-46. Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> From *The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty*, 1641, quoted M. M. vol. i. p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> This undated and unaddressed letter is preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. The sonnet therein transcribed shows it to have been written about the beginning of 1632. M. M. vol. i. p. 323.

delay proceeds not from the delights of desultory study, but from the desire of obtaining more fitness for his task; and that he goes on, *not taking thought of being late, so it give advantage to be more fit.*<sup>1</sup>

When he left the university,<sup>2</sup> he returned to his father, then residing at Horton<sup>3</sup> in Buckinghamshire, with whom he lived five years; in which time he is said to have read ~~and~~ all the Greek and Latin writers. With what limitations this universality is to be understood, who shall inform us?

It might be supposed that he who read so much should have done nothing else; but Milton found time to write the Masque of "Comus," which was presented at Ludlow, then the residence of the Lord President of Wales, in 1634;<sup>4</sup> and had the honour of being acted by the Earl of Bridgewater's sons and daughter. The fiction is derived from Homer's "Circe;"<sup>5</sup> but we never can refuse to any modern the liberty of borrowing from Homer:

"—a quo ceu fonte perenni  
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This letter is given at length in *M. M.* vol. i. p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> Milton left Cambridge in July, 1632. He was incorporated M. A. of Oxford in the year 1635. See Wood, *Fasti Oxonienses*, vol. i. p. 262. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 390.

<sup>3</sup> A village about twenty miles from London, not far from Windsor. The most important of Milton's English Poems were written there.

<sup>4</sup> First printed in 1637, and entitled *A Maske. Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, on Michaelmas Night*. The name of Comus was never affixed to it by Milton.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Cunningham remarks that Comus had its origin partly in an accident which occurred to the sons and daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater (they were benighted in Haywood Forest), and partly in the *Old Wives Tale*, a comedy by George Peele (1595, 4to.), in which two brothers are represented as wandering in quest of their sister, whom an enchanter had imprisoned.

<sup>6</sup> Ovid, *Amores*, iii.-ix. 25.

His next production was "Lycidas," an elegy, written in 1637, on the death of Mr. King,<sup>1</sup> the son of Sir John King, secretary for Ireland in the time of Elizabeth, James, and Charles. King was much a favourite at Cambridge, and many of the wits joined to do honour to his memory.<sup>2</sup> Milton's acquaintance with the Italian writers may be discovered by a mixture of longer and shorter verses, according to the rules of Tuscan poetry, and his malignity to the Church by some lines which are interpreted as threatening its extermination.

He is supposed about this time to have written his "Arcades;"<sup>3</sup> for while he lived at Horton he used sometimes to steal from his studies a few days, which he spent at Harefield, the house of the countess dowager of Derby, where the "Arcades" made part of a dramattick entertainment.

He began now to grow weary of the country; and had some purpose of taking chambers in the Inns of Court, when the death of his mother<sup>4</sup> set him at liberty to travel, for which he obtained his father's consent, and Sir Henry Wotton's<sup>5</sup> directions, with the celebrated precept of pru-

<sup>1</sup> By shipwreck in the Irish seas, Aug. 10th, 1637, aged 25.

<sup>2</sup> The collection consisted of two parts. One contains twenty-three pieces in Latin and Greek, the other thirteen English poems, separately paged, and with the title *Obsequies to the memorie of Mr. Edward King, Anno Dom. 1638*, surrounded by a black border. Milton's contribution is placed last in the English series.

<sup>3</sup> Ald. *M.* vol. iii. p. 148. The date of performance was probably 1633. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 597. The aged Countess of Derby, to whom this little piece was dedicated, was the same lady to whom, in her blooming youth, Spenser had presented his *Tears of the Muses*.

<sup>4</sup> Milton describes her as "a most excellent mother, and particularly known for her charities in the neighbourhood." She died April 3rd, 1637, and the stone which covers her grave may still be seen on the chancel floor of the church at Horton.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), a scholar, diplomatist, and poet, died Provost of Eton. His life was written by Izaak Walton. *M. ARNOLD*, p. 457. The letter here alluded to is given *M. M.* vol. i. p. 737.



dence, *i pensieri stretti, ed il viso sciolto*; "thoughts close, and looks loose."

In 1638 he left England,<sup>1</sup> and went first to Paris; where, by the favour of Lord Scudamore,<sup>2</sup> he had the opportunity of visiting Grotius,<sup>3</sup> then residing at the French court as ambassador from Christina of Sweden. From Paris he hasted into Italy, of which he had with particular diligence studied the language and literature: and, though he seems to have intended a very quick perambulation of the country, staid two months at Florence; where he found his way into the academies,<sup>4</sup> and produced his compositions with such applause as appears to have exalted him in his own opinion, and confirmed him in the hope, that, "by labour and intense study, which," says he, "I take to be my portion in this life, joined with a strong propensity of nature," he might "leave something so written to after-times, as they should not willingly let it die."<sup>5</sup>

It appears, in all his writings, that he had the usual con-

<sup>1</sup> This account of his travels is taken from Milton's own narrative in the *Defensio Secunda*. 1654. 12mo.

<sup>2</sup> Son of the Sir James Scudamore immortalized as "Sir Scudamour" of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, born 1600. He was a man of talent, had travelled much, and was so assiduous a collector and reader of books that Laud had to give him the advice "not to book it too hard." He was also much devoted to husbandry, and introduced the cultivation of the "red-streak apple" for the purpose of eider making.

<sup>3</sup> Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), a scholar, theologian, and diplomatist; one of the most celebrated men whom Holland has produced. Matt. Arnold, p. 457. He published in 1601 a Latin tragedy, *Adamus Exul*, from which Milton is said to have taken some hints for *Paradise Lost*. For Johnson's tribute to the learning of Grotius, *vid. supr.* p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> On the number and influence of the Italian Academies, see *M. M.* vol. i. pp. 763-5.

<sup>5</sup> This is from *The Reason of Church Government urged against the Prelaty*, 1641. On Milton's pamphlets, see *M. M.* vol. ii. pp. 356-409.



comitant of great abilities, a lofty and steady confidence in himself, perhaps not without some contempt of others; for scarcely any man ever wrote so much, and praised so few. Of his praise he was very frugal; as he set its value high, and considered his mention of a name as a security against the waste of time, and a certain preservative from oblivion.

At Florence he could not indeed complain that his merit wanted distinction. Carlo Dati<sup>1</sup> presented him with an encomiastick inscription, in the tumid lapidary style;<sup>2</sup> and Francini<sup>3</sup> wrote him an ode, of which the first stanza is only empty noise; the rest are perhaps too diffuse on common topicks: but the last is natural and beautiful.

From Florence he went to Sienna, and from Sienna to Rome, where he was again received with kindness by the Learned and the Great. Holstenius,<sup>4</sup> the keeper of the Vatican Library, who had resided three years at Oxford, introduced him to Cardinal Barberini;<sup>5</sup> and he, at a musical entertainment,<sup>6</sup> waited for him at the door, and

<sup>1</sup> Carlo Dati (1619-1675) was one of the most striking, popular, and eloquent Italians of his day; his *Lives of the Ancient Painters* is still in use. At the time of this visit he was still only in his nineteenth year. He formed an ardent attachment to Milton, who places him second on his list of seven "noble and learned" Florentines. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 775.

<sup>2</sup> On the allowable exaggerations of lapidary inscriptions, see Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. ii. p. 369.

<sup>3</sup> Francini was the last on Milton's list; he, too, was very young, and had some reputation in the academies for Italian poetry. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 780.

<sup>4</sup> Lucas Holstenius, a famous German scholar (1596-1661). He was a naturalized Roman, and librarian of the Vatican.

<sup>5</sup> Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597-1679). Masson describes him (vol. i. p. 798) as the prime minister of Rome, and the chief councillor of his uncle Pope Urban VIII. He founded the Barberini Library, which attained celebrity even by the side of that at the Vatican, and he numbered many scholars, artists, and poets among his clients.

<sup>6</sup> At this magnificent concert, described by Milton in a letter to Holstenius, he probably heard for the first time the celebrated singer

led him by the hand into the assembly. Here Selvaggi praised him in a distich, and Salsilli in a tetrastick: neither of them of much value. The Italians were gainers by this literary commerce; for the encomiums with which Milton repaid Salsilli,<sup>1</sup> though not secure against a stern grammarian, turn the balance indisputably in Milton's favour.

Of these Italian testimonies, poor as they are, he was proud enough to publish them before his poems; though he says, he cannot be suspected but to have known that they were said *non tam de se, quam supra se*.

At Rome, as at Florence, he staid only two months; a time indeed sufficient, if he desired only to ramble with an explainer of its antiquities, or to view palaces and count pictures; but certainly too short for the contemplation of learning, policy, or manners.

From Rome he passed on to Naples,<sup>2</sup> in company of a hermit;<sup>3</sup> a companion from whom little could be expected, yet to him Milton owed his introduction to Manso marquis of Villa, who had been before the patron of Tasso.<sup>4</sup> Manso

Leonora Baroni, his admiration for whom he commemorated in three Latin epigrams.

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Salzili, an Italian poet, not mentioned in the histories of Italian literature, but an important personage among the Fanastici, and a contributor to a volume published by them in 1637. Milton addressed to him a Latin poem of condolence in his illness. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 806.

<sup>2</sup> Probably late in November, 1638.

<sup>3</sup> The name is not given of "A certain Eremite Friar." *M. M.* vol. i. p. 807.

<sup>4</sup> Giovanni Battista Manso, an Italian nobleman (1561-1645). Milton, in a letter, calls him "a most noble and important man." He was the intimate friend and protector of Tasso till his death in 1595, and then performed the same good offices for Marini, a second-rate poet, but one who in his day enjoyed a scarcely inferior fame. Manso's *Life of Tasso* is commended by Masson for its singularly affectionate collection of details concerning Tasso, and for a most charming description of Naples. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 813.

was enough delighted with his accomplishments to honour him with a sorry distich, in which he commends him for every thing but his religion; and Milton, in return, addressed him in a Latin poem,<sup>1</sup> which must have raised an high opinion of English elegance and literature.

His purpose was now to have visited Sicily and Greece; but, hearing of the differences between the king and parliament, he thought it proper to hasten home, rather than pass his life in foreign amusements while his countrymen were contending for their rights. He therefore came back to Rome, though the merchants informed him of plots laid against him by the Jesuits, for the liberty of his conversations on religion. He had sense enough to judge that there was no danger, and therefore kept on his way, and acted as before, neither obtruding nor shunning controversy. He had perhaps given some offence by visiting Galileo,<sup>2</sup> then a prisoner in the Inquisition for philosophical heresy; and at Naples he was told by Manso, that, by his declarations on religious questions, he had excluded himself from some distinctions which he should otherwise have paid him. But such conduct, though it did not please, was yet sufficiently safe; and Milton staid two

<sup>1</sup> This poem was written by Milton in his inn at Naples to Manso in his villa, where he had so often sheltered Tasso and Marini. For a translation of it see *M. M.* vol. i. p. 816.

<sup>2</sup> "There it was," says Milton in the *Areopagitica*, "that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought." For the meeting of Milton with the aged and blind astronomer, see *M. M.* vol. i. p. 788. Milton refers to Galileo, *Paradise Lost*, vol. i. p. 287, vol. v. p. 262, and in the *Areopagitica*, p. 35, ed. Hales. It may be well to observe that Galileo, though a prisoner "to the Inquisition," was never a prisoner in the Inquisition. He was confined in a palace of the Piccolomini for a time, and was afterwards permitted to return to Florence, where he resided under the surveillance of the Inquisition till his death in 1642.



months more at Rome, and went on to Florence without molestation.

From Florence he visited Lucca. He afterwards went to Venice; and having sent away a collection of musick and other books, travelled to Geneva, which he probably considered as the metropolis of orthodoxy. Here he reposed, as in a congenial element, and became acquainted with John Diodati<sup>1</sup> and Frederick Spanheim,<sup>2</sup> two learned professors of Divinity. From Geneva he passed through France; and came home, after an absence of a year and three months.

At his return he heard of the death of his friend Charles Diodati;<sup>3</sup> a man whom it is reasonable to suppose of great merit, since he was thought by Milton worthy of a poem, intituled, "Epitaphium Damonis,"<sup>4</sup> written with the common but childish imitation of pastoral life.

He now hired a lodging at the house of one Russel, a taylor in St. Bride's Churchyard,<sup>5</sup> and undertook the edu-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jean or Giovanni Diodati (1576-1649), uncle of Milton's friend, is now best known in association with the Italian version of the Scriptures called Diodati's Bible. He was professor of theology, a great controversialist, and had a special celebrity as an instructor of young men of rank, sent from various parts of Europe to board in his house, amongst others Charles Gustavus, afterwards King of Sweden. The house is still called Villa Diodati, and was tenanted in 1816 by Lord Byron. Milton was very probably quartered there during his visit, for he says he was "daily in the society of John Diodati, the most learned professor of theology." *M. M.* vol. i. p. 833.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Spanheim, a learned German, professor of philosophy at Geneva (1600-1649).

<sup>3</sup> Charles Diodati (1609-1638), Milton's bosom friend. In his letters he calls him "my own loving heart," "my so faithful one," and his "sprightly companion." The register of the burial of Charles and his sister in August, 1638, have been found in the parish books of St. Anne's, Blackfriars. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 830.

or account and translation of this poem, which was the last of any rance in Latin, see *M. M.* vol. ii. pp. 83-93.

<sup>5</sup> *Life of Milton*, by Edward Philips, pp. 362-364.

cation of John and Edward Philips,<sup>1</sup> his sister's sons. Finding his rooms too little, he took a house and garden in Aldersgate-street, which was not then so much out of the world as it is now; and chose his dwelling at the upper end of a passage, that he might avoid the noise of the street. Here he received more boys, to be boarded and instructed.

Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performance, on the man who hastens home, because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school. This is the period of his life from which all his biographers seem inclined to shrink. They are unwilling that Milton should be degraded to a school-master; but, since it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out that he taught for nothing, and another that his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue; and all tell what they do not know to be true, only to excuse an act which no wise man will consider as in itself disgraceful. His father was alive; his allowance was not ample; and he supplied its deficiencies by an honest and useful employment.

It is told, that in the art of education he performed wonders; and a formidable list is given of the authors, Greek and Latin, that were read in Aldersgate-street,<sup>2</sup> by youth between ten and fifteen or sixteen years of age. Those who tell or receive these stories should consider that nobody can be taught faster than he can learn. The speed of the horseman must be limited by the power of his horse. Every man, that has ever undertaken to instruct others, can tell what slow advances he has been able to make, and

<sup>1</sup> Edward Philips was the elder (1630-1694). John (1631-1698), was the peculiar charge of Milton. Both were authors by profession.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, by Edward Philips, p. 362.



how much patience it requires to recall vagrant inattention, to stimulate sluggish indifference, and to rectify absurd misapprehension.

The purpose of Milton, as it seems, was to teach something more solid than the common literature of Schools, by reading those authors that treat of physical subjects; such as the Georgick, and astronomical treatises of the ancients. This was a scheme of improvement which seems to have busied many literary projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was wanting to the embellishments of life, formed the same plan of education in his imaginary College.<sup>1</sup>

But the truth is,<sup>2</sup> that the knowledge of external nature, and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or conversation, whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind, and with those examples which may be said to embody truth, and prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and Justice are virtues, and excellences, of all times and of all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with

<sup>1</sup> See Cowley's *Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy*. (Cowley's *Poems*, ed. 1710, vol. ii. p. 608), a grand scheme of college and school with "twenty Philosophers or Professors," four of whom were to be "always travelling beyond seas." He thinks a revenue of £4,000 a year would suffice, and urges its being placed close to London, and if it be possible, upon the side of the river or very near it.

<sup>2</sup> For Masson's admirable remarks on this paragraph, see vol. iii. pp. 251-2. He concludes with these words, "Above all, the noble moral glow that pervades the 'Tract of Education,' the mood of magnanimity in which it is conceived and written, and the faith it inculcates in the powers the young human spirit, if rightly nurtured and directed, are merits everlasting."

intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary, and at leisure. Physiological learning is of such rare emergence, that one man may know another half his life without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostaticks or astronomy; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears.

Those authors, therefore, are to be read at schools that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation; and these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians.

Let me not be censured for this digression as pedantick or paradoxical; for if I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side. It was his labour to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life; but the innovators whom I oppose are turning off attention from life to nature. They seem to think, that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars. Socrates was rather of opinion, that what we had to learn was, how to do good, and avoid evil.

Ὅτι τοι ἐν μεγάροις κακόντ' ἀγαθόντε τίτυκται.<sup>1</sup>

Of institutions we may judge by their effects. From this wonder-working academy, I do not know that there ever proceeded any man very eminent for knowledge: its only genuine product, I believe, is a small History of Poetry,<sup>2</sup> written in Latin by his nephew Philips, of which perhaps none of my readers has ever heard.

<sup>1</sup> Hom. *Od.* iv. 392.

<sup>2</sup> This *Tractatulus de Carmine Dramatico Poetarum veterum Præsertim in Choris Tragicis et veteris Comædiæ*, together with *Compendiosa Enumeratio Poetarum*, &c. &c. *qui a tempore Dantis Aligerii*, &c. *ab Ed. Phillippo*, is now found at the heel of *Buchleri Sacrarum Profanarumque Phrasium Poeticarum Thesaurus*, 18th ed. Lond. 1679. In the second of these tracts (p. 399) are the following highly eulogistic remarks upon *Paradise Lost*: "Joannes Miltonus præter alia quæ scripsit Elegantissimum Anglice tum Latine, nuper publici juris fecit *Paradisum amissum Poema* quod sive sublimitatem Argumenti, sive *Leporem* simul et *Majes-*

That in his school, as in every thing else which he undertook, he laboured with great diligence, there is no reason for doubting. One part of his method deserves general imitation. He was careful to instruct his scholars in religion. Every Sunday was spent upon theology, of which he dictated a short system, gathered from the writers that were then fashionable in the Dutch universities.<sup>1</sup>

He set his pupils an example of hard study and spare diet; only now and then he allowed himself to pass a day of festivity and indulgence with some gay gentlemen of Gray's Inn.

He now began to engage in the controversies of the times, and lent his breath to blow the flames of contention.

tatem styli, sive sublimitatem Inventionis, sive similitudines et descriptiones quam maxime naturales respiciamus, vere Heroicum, ni fallor, audiet Plurimum enim suffragiis qui non nesciunt judicare censetur perfectionem hujus generis Poematis assecutum esse."

On the authority of Wood (*Athen. Oxon.* iv. p. 672, ed. Bliss, Lond. 1820), who asserts that some copies of the 17th ed. (1669) of Buchler's *Thesaurus* contain Philips's tracts, Warton, Godwin, and Masson claim for E. Philips to have been the first to publicly praise *Paradise Lost*. But Wood ascribes the tracts to John Philips, and as he is certainly wrong in that ascription he may have fallen into further confusion. It is possible that these tracts were originally published separately in the same form as Philips's *Tractatulus, &c. &c. de Linguae Latinae*, 1682, 4to, now in the British Museum, and may have been bound up with some early copies of Buchler's *Thesaurus*, but, as at present found in Buchler, no mention is made of a separate or earlier publication. Edward Philips was also the author of *Theatrum Poetarum*, or a *Compleat Collection of the Poets*, London, Smith, 1675. This is written in English, and contains two paragraphs on Milton "the exactest of Heroic Poets," "who hath revived the majesty and true decorum of Heroic Poesy and Tragedy." Part ii. pp. 113-114.

<sup>1</sup> The writers mentioned by Philips are Amesius, Wollebius, &c. Dr. William Ames (1576-1633), was conspicuous as a Nonconformist at Cambridge in the beginning of the reign of James I. He was driven abroad by Bancroft's severity in 1610, and finally became minister of the English Congregationalist Church in Rotterdam. He was author of the *Medulla Theologiae*, and other theological works. Wollebius (1536-1626), was a divine of Basle, and author of a *Compendium Theologiae*. M. M. vol. iii. p. 254.



In 1641 he published a treatise of "Reformation,"<sup>1</sup> in two books, against the established Church; being willing to help the Puritans, who were, he says, *inferior to the Prelates in learning*.

Hall bishop of Norwich<sup>2</sup> had published an "Humble Remonstrance," in defence of Episcopacy; to which, in 1641, six<sup>3</sup> ministers, of whose names the first letters made the celebrated word *Smectymnuus*,<sup>4</sup> gave their Answer. Of this answer a Confutation was attempted by the learned Usher; and to the Confutation Milton published a Reply, intituled, "Of Prelatical Episcopacy, and whether it may be deduced from the Apostolical Times, by virtue of those testimonies which are alledged to that purpose in some late treatises, one whereof goes under the name of James Lord Bishop of Armagh."

I have transcribed this title, to shew, by his contemptuous mention of Usher,<sup>5</sup> that he had now adopted the

<sup>1</sup> This was the first of the grand series of Milton's pamphlets. His thesis was that the European Reformation begun by Luther had been arrested in England at a point far less advanced than that which it had reached in other countries, and that, in consequence, England had ever since been suffering, and struggling, and incapacitated as by a load of nightmare only half thrown off for the full and free exercise of her splendid spirit. *M. M.* vol. ii. p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Hall (1574-1656), celebrated as one of the first English satirists, and a very eminent, learned and pious prelate, sometimes called the Christian Seneca.

<sup>3</sup> A singular slip; they were but five in number.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, William Spinstow.

<sup>5</sup> James Usher, Archbishop of Armagh (1580-1655). In 1642 political troubles caused him to remove to Oxford, and he was nominated to the Bishopric of Chester, *in commendam*, with his Irish primacy. In 1643 he was chosen to represent the Oxford University in the assembly of divines at Westminster, but he refused to sit with them, and remained with the king at Oxford. Of his many learned works, the *Annals of the World*, first (1650) in Latin, and then translated by the author (1658) is the most valuable. His chronology is followed on the

puritanical savageness of manners. His next work was, "The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy, by Mr. John Milton,"<sup>1</sup> 1642. In this book he discovers, not with ostentatious exultation, but with calm confidence, his high opinion of his own powers; and promises to undertake something, he yet knows not what, that may be of use and honour to his country. "This," says he, "is not to be obtained but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added, industrious and select reading, steady observation, and insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compast, I refuse not to sustain this expectation." From a promise like this, at once fervid, pious, and rational, might be expected the "Paradise Lost."

He published the same year two more pamphlets,<sup>2</sup> upon the same question. To one of his antagonists, who affirms that he was *vomited out of the university*, he answers, in general terms; "The Fellows of the College wherein I spent some years, at my parting, after I had taken two degrees, as the manner is, signified many times how much

margins of our Bibles. He was, by the order of Cromwell, buried in Erasmus' Chapel in Westminster Abbey, and his fine library was bought by the officers and soldiers of Cromwell's army in Ireland, and lodged in Dublin Castle. When these books came into the possession of Charles II. he presented them to Dublin College, where they now remain. Dr. Parr published his letters and posthumous papers with a *Life* prefixed, 1787.

<sup>1</sup> This is Milton's fourth anti-episcopal pamphlet, a small quarto of sixty-five pages of close type. *M. M.* vol. ii. p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> The third pamphlet, pub. 1641, *Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnus*, and the fifth, pub. 1642, *An Apology against A Modest Confutation of the Animadversions, &c. &c. against Smectymnus*. *M. M.* vol. ii. pp. 257, 398.



better it would content them that I should stay.—As for the common approbation or dislike of that place, as now it is, that I should esteem or disesteem myself the more for that, too simple is the answerer, if he think to obtain with me. Of small practice were the physician who could not judge, by what she and her sister have of long time vomited, that the worser stuff she strongly keeps in her stomach, but the better she is ever kecking at, and is queasy: she vomits now out of sickness; but before it be well with her, she must vomit by strong physick.—The university, in the time of her better health, and my younger judgement, I never greatly admired, but now much less.”<sup>1</sup>

This is surely the language of a man who thinks that he has been injured. He proceeds to describe the course of his conduct, and the train of his thoughts; and, because he has been suspected of incontinence, gives an account of his own purity: “That if I be justly charged,” says he, “with this crime, it may come upon me with tenfold shame.”

The style of his piece is rough, and such perhaps was that of his antagonist. This roughness he justifies, by great examples, in a long digression. Sometimes he tries to be humorous:<sup>2</sup> “Lest I should take him for some chaplain in hand, some squire of the body to his prelate, one who serves not at the altar only but at the Court-cup-board, he will bestow on us a pretty model of himself; and sets me out half a dozen ptisical mottos, wherever he had them, hopping short in the measure of convulsion fits; in which labour the agony of his wit having scaped narrowly, instead of well-sized periods, he greets us with a

<sup>1</sup> This quotation is from Milton's fifth pamphlet (see preceding note) on the Church Question, the *Apology*, written in answer to an attack on him by Robert Hall, the son of the Bishop. *M. M.* vol. ii. p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> This is also from the fifth pamphlet.

quantity of thumbing posies.—And thus ends this section, or rather dissection of himself." Such is the controversial merriment of Milton; his gloomy seriousness is yet more offensive. Such is his malignity, *that hell grows darker at his frown*.<sup>1</sup>

His father, after Reading was taken by Essex,<sup>2</sup> came to reside in his house; and his school increased. At Whitsuntide, in his thirty-fifth year, he married Mary, the daughter of Mr. Powel,<sup>3</sup> a justice of the Peace in Oxfordshire. He brought her to town with him, and expected all the advantages of a conjugal life. The lady, however, seems not much to have delighted in the pleasures of spare diet and hard study; for, as Philips relates,<sup>4</sup> "having for a month led a philosophical life, after having been used at home to a great house, and much company and joviality, her friends, possibly by her own desire, made earnest suit to have her company the remaining part of the summer; which was granted, upon a promise of her return at Michaelmas."

Milton was too busy to much miss his wife: he pursued his studies; and now and then visited the Lady Margaret Leigh, whom he has mentioned in one of his sonnets.<sup>5</sup> At last Michaelmas arrived; but the Lady had no inclination

<sup>1</sup> "So frowned the mighty combatants, that Hell  
Grew darker at their frown."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Reading surrendered to the Earl of Essex, April 27th, 1643. See Clarendon, *Hist. Rebell.* vol. iv. p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of the Powells and interesting details of their house and household, see *M. M.* vol. ii. p. 500.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, Godwin, p. 366.

<sup>5</sup> Milton's tenth Sonnet is addressed to The Lady Margaret Ley. "Honoured Margaret," was the daughter of Sir James Ley, (1552-1629), who was Lord High Treasurer in 1622, and Lord President of the Council in 1628. Philips describes her as "a woman of great wit and ingenuity."

<sup>6</sup> *Paradise Lost*, ii. 719.

to return to the sullen gloom of her husband's habitation, and therefore very willingly forgot her promise. He sent her a letter, but had no answer; he sent more with the same success. It could be alleged that letters miscarry; he therefore dispatched a messenger, being by this time too angry to go himself. His messenger was sent back with some contempt. The family of the Lady were Cavaliers.

In a man whose opinion of his own merit was like Milton's, less provocation than this might have raised violent resentment. Milton soon determined to repudiate her for disobedience; and, being one of those who could easily find arguments to justify inclination, published (in 1644) "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce;"<sup>1</sup> which was followed by "The Judgement of Martin Bucer, concerning Divorce;" and the next year, his *Tetrachordon*, "Expositions upon the four chief Places of Scripture which treat of Marriage."

This innovation was opposed, as might be expected, by the clergy; who, then holding their famous assembly at Westminster,<sup>2</sup> procured that the author should be called before the Lords; "but that House," says Wood, "whether approving the doctrine, or not favouring his accusers, did soon dismiss him."

There seems not to have been much written against him, nor any thing by any writer of eminence.<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The first edition of this tract was out in London, August 1st, 1643. *M. M.* vol. iii. p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> On May 9th, 1642, a Bill was brought in "for calling an Assembly of godly and learned Divines to be consulted with by the Parliament for settling of the government and Liturgy of the Church, and for vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from false aspersions and interpretations." But the first meeting of the famous Westminster Assembly did not take place till July 1st, 1643. For a full account of the same see *M. M.* vol. ii. pp. 509-527.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of the different attacks on Milton's *Divorce Treatise* see *M. M.* vol. iii. pp. 262, 297, 467.





resisted her intreaties for a while; "but partly," says Philips,<sup>1</sup> "his own generous nature, more inclinable to reconciliation than to perseverance in anger or revenge, and partly the strong intercession of friends on both sides, soon brought him to an act of oblivion and a firm league of peace." It were injurious to omit, that Milton afterwards received her father<sup>2</sup> and her brothers in his own house, when they were distressed, with other Royalists.

He published<sup>3</sup> about the same time his "Areopagitica, a Speech of Mr. John Milton for the liberty of unlicensed Printing." The danger of such unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the science of Government, which human understanding seems hitherto unable to solve. If nothing may be published but what civil authority shall have previously approved, power must always be the standard of truth; if every dreamer of innovations may propagate his projects, there can be no settlement; if every murmurer at government may diffuse discontent, there can be no peace; and if every sceptick in theology may teach his follies, there can be no religion. The remedy against these evils is to punish the authors; for it is yet allowed that every society may punish, though not prevent, the publication of opinions, which that society shall think pernicious; but this punishment, though it may crush the author, promotes the book; and it seems not more reasonable to leave the right of printing unrestrained, because writers may be afterwards censured, than it would be to sleep with doors unbolted, because by our laws we can hang a thief.

But whatever were his engagements, civil or domestick,

<sup>1</sup> See Godwin's *Lives*, p. 369.

<sup>2</sup> Her father died in Milton's house on or about Jan. 1st, 1646-7.

<sup>3</sup> November, 1644. *M. M.* vol. iii. p. 277. On the system of licensing opposed by Milton, see Prof. Hales' Preface to his edition of the *Areopagitica*.



poetry was never long out of his thoughts. About this time (1645) a collection of his Latin and English poems appeared, in which the "Allegro" and "Penseroso," with some others, were first published.<sup>1</sup>

He had taken a larger house<sup>2</sup> in Barbican for the reception of scholars; but the numerous relations of his wife, to whom he generously granted refuge for a while, occupied his rooms. In time, however, they went away; "and the house again," says Philips,<sup>3</sup> "now looked like a house of the Muses only, though the accession of scholars was not great. Possibly his having proceeded so far in the education of youth, may have been the occasion of his adversaries calling him pedagogue and school-master; whereas it is well known he never set up for a publick school, to teach all the young fry of a parish; but only was willing to impart his learning and knowledge to relations, and the sons of gentlemen who were his intimate friends; and that neither his writings nor his way of teaching ever savoured in the least of pedantry."

Thus laboriously does his nephew extenuate what cannot be denied, and what might be confessed without disgrace. Milton was not a man who could become mean by a mean employment. This, however, his warmest friends seem not to have found; they therefore shift and palliate. He did not sell literature to all comers at an open shop; he was a chamber-milliner, and measured his commodities only to his friends.

Philips, evidently impatient of viewing him in this state

<sup>1</sup> Printed for Humphrey Moseley, the great poetical publisher between 1640 and 1660. He was succeeded by Heringman, as Heringman was by Tonson. Before this exquisite little volume (now fetching a high price) is a print of Milton by Marshall, with Milton's satirical Greek verses beneath it.—P. CUNNINGHAM, vol. i. p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> In September, 1645. During the two years of Milton's residence here the deaths occurred of both his father and father-in-law. *M. M.* vol. iii. pp. 442-444.

<sup>3</sup> Godwin's *Lives*, p. 370.

of degradation, tells us that it was not long continued; and, to raise his character again, has a mind to invest him with military splendour: "He is much mistaken," he says,<sup>1</sup> "if there was not about this time a design of making him an adjutant-general in Sir William Waller's army. But the new modelling of the army proved an obstruction to the design." An event cannot be set at a much greater distance than by having been only *designed, about some time, if a man be not much mistaken*. Milton shall be a pedagogue no longer; for, if Philips be not much mistaken, somebody at some time designed him for a soldier.

About the time that the army was new-modelled (1645) he removed<sup>2</sup> to a smaller house in Holbourn, which opened backward into Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. He is not known to have published any thing afterwards till the King's death, when, finding his murderers condemned by the Presbyterians, he wrote a treatise to justify it,<sup>3</sup> and to *compose the minds of the people*.<sup>4</sup>

He made some "Remarks on the Articles of Peace between Ormond and the Irish Rebels."<sup>5</sup> While he contented himself to write, he perhaps did only what his conscience dictated; and if he did not very vigilantly watch the influence of his own passions, and the gradual prevalence of opinions, first willingly admitted and then habitually indulged, if objections, by being overlooked, were forgotten, and desire superinduced conviction; he yet shared only the common weakness of mankind, and might be no less sincere than his opponents. But as faction seldom leaves

<sup>1</sup> See Godwin's *Lives*, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> This removal must have taken place in September or October, 1647. Perhaps the death of his father, which took place in March, 1647, enabled him to give up teaching. *M. M.* iii. 643-666.

<sup>3</sup> *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, &c. &c. 1649.

<sup>4</sup> Five years later Milton thus described his *Tenure of Kings* pamphlet in his *Defensio Secunda*.

<sup>5</sup> *Observations on the Articles*, &c. pub. 1649.

a man honest, however it might find him, Milton is suspected<sup>1</sup> of having interpolated the book called "*Icon Basilike*,"<sup>2</sup> which the Council of State, to whom he was now made Latin secretary,<sup>3</sup> employed him to censure, by inserting a prayer taken from Sidney's "*Arcadia*," and imputing it to the King; whom he charges, in his "*Iconoclastes*,"<sup>4</sup> with the use of this prayer as with a heavy crime, in the indecent language with which prosperity had emboldened the advocates for rebellion to insult all that is venerable or great: "Who would have imagined so little fear in him of the true all-seeing Deity—as, immediately before his death, to pop into the hands of the grave bishop that attended him, as a special relique of his saintly exercises, a prayer stolen word for word from the mouth of a heathen woman praying to a heathen god?"

The papers which the King gave to Dr. Juxon on the scaffold the regicides took away, so that they were at least the publishers of this prayer; and Dr. Birch, who had examined the question with great care, was inclined to think them the forgers. The use of it by adaptation was innocent; and they who could so noisily censure it, with a little extension of their malice could contrive what they wanted to accuse.

King Charles the Second, being now sheltered in Hol-

<sup>1</sup> For the refutation of this groundless charge see *M. M.* iv. 250, and Todd's *Milton*, i. 73, ed. 1852.

<sup>2</sup> *Icon Basilike*. This famous literary forgery, the *Picture of a King*, was published by Dr. Gauden, afterwards Bishop of Exeter, from a manuscript said to have been entrusted to him by Charles I. himself, and became very popular. Milton answered it by his *Iconoclastes*.—*M. ARNOLD*, p. 458. For a description of one of the most famous books of the world, see *M. M.* iv. 33, 129.

<sup>3</sup> Milton was inducted into this office, March 20th, 1648-9, with a salary of £288 13s. 6d. that is about £1,000 of our present value, with lodgings in Whitehall. *M. M.* iv. 150.

<sup>4</sup> *Iconoclastes*, or *The Image Breaker*, 1649. 4to. pp. 240.



land, employed Salmasius,<sup>1</sup> professor of Polite Learning at Leyden, to write a defence of his father and of monarchy; and, to excite his industry, gave him, as was reported, a hundred Jacobuses.<sup>2</sup> Salmasius was a man of skill in languages, knowledge of antiquity, and sagacity of emendatory criticism, almost exceeding all hope of human attainment; and having, by excessive praises, been confirmed in great confidence of himself, though he probably had not much considered the principles of society or the rights of government, undertook the employment without distrust of his own qualifications; and, as his expedition in writing was wonderful, in 1649 published "*Defensio Regis.*"

To this Milton was required to write a sufficient answer; which he performed<sup>3</sup> (1651) in such a manner, that Hobbes<sup>4</sup> declared himself unable to decide whose language

<sup>1</sup> Claude de Saumaise, a Frenchman, 1588, called generally Claudius Salmasius, was one of the most celebrated men in Europe. Of his thirty or forty great books the master-work was a vast folio published at Paris 1629, *Cl. Salmasii Pliniane Exercitationes in Cuii Julii Solini Polyhistoria*, being an illustrative commentary on the *Polyhistory* of Solinus which contained a geographical and historical sketch of the world as known to the ancients, and with Salmasius' notes forms a huge encyclopædia of philological and antiquarian lore. *M. M.* iv. 162, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> A Jacobus was worth twenty shillings.

<sup>3</sup> By writing his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*. At this time Milton's left eye was already useless, and he was warned that the other might soon fail him. The fame of this book was immense. All Europe began to ring with the name of Milton, and the excitement was only increased by the public burning of the book at Paris and Toulouse by the hands of the common hangman. *M. M.* iv. 341.

<sup>4</sup> "Undoubtedly," says Prof. Masson, "the most important philosophical or systematic thinker that England has produced since Bacon," was Thomas Hobbes, (1588-1679). "In some respects a bolder and more thorough thinker than Bacon;" "a grim and very irascible old Aristotle, and one can trace the descent of his main notions through the whole subsequent course of English philosophy." *M. M.* vi. 280. His first work was his English translation of the *History of Thucydides*. This was revised by Ben Jonson, and is much esteemed. He devoted his time

was best, or whose arguments were worst. In my opinion, Milton's periods are smoother, neater, and more pointed; but he delights himself with teasing his adversary as much as with confuting him. He makes a foolish allusion of Salmasius, whose doctrine he considers as servile and unmanly, to the stream of "Salmacis," which whoever entered left half his virility behind him. Salmasius was a Frenchman, and was unhappily married to a scold. *Tu es Gallus*, says Milton, *et, ut aiunt, nimium gallinaceus*. But his supreme pleasure is to tax his adversary, so renowned for criticism, with vitious Latin. He opens his book with telling that he has used *Persona*, which, according to Milton, signifies only a *Mask*, in a sense not known to the Romans, by applying it as we apply *Person*. But as Nemesis is always on the watch, it is memorable that he has enforced the charge of a solecism by an expression in itself grossly solecistical, when, for one of those supposed blunders, he says, as Ker,<sup>1</sup> and I think some one before him,<sup>2</sup> has remarked, *propino te grammatistis tuis vapulandum*. From *capulo*, which has a passive sense, *vapulandus* can never be derived. No man forgets his original trade: the rights of nations, and of kings, sink into questions of grammar, if grammarians discuss them.

Milton when he undertook this answer was weak of

and life to framing a system of philosophy, which he called his *Levianthan*. He was the friend though an opponent of Descartes, and the intimate friend of Dr. Hervey, Selden and Cowley.

<sup>1</sup> *Selectarum de Lingua Latina*, &c. &c. Joannes Ker, M.D. Lond. 1709. *Liber alter* under *Vapulandum*. Mitford points out Vavassor in Crenius in the Aldine edition of Milton, 1832, vol. i. p. lxiv, but gives no reference to Ker.

<sup>2</sup> *Illud mirum pariter et festivum quod is quo loco et quibus plane verbis attribuit Salmasio solæcismos, iisdem ipse solæcismum, aut solæcismo flugitium non minus admittat.* Vavassor, *De Epigr.* xxii. p. 301-2 (1678), referred to by Crenius *Animadv. Philolog.* (1695), iv. p. 73. Both Vavassor and Crenius are quoted by Ker.



body, and dim of sight; but his will was forward, and what was wanting of health was supplied by zeal. He was rewarded by a thousand pounds,<sup>1</sup> and his book was much read; for paradox, recommended by spirit and elegance, easily gains attention; and he who told every man that he was equal to his King, could hardly want an audience.

That the performance of Salmasius was not dispersed with equal rapidity, or read with equal eagerness, is very credible. He taught only the stale doctrine of authority, and the unpleasing duty of submission; and he had been so long not only the monarch but the tyrant of literature, that almost all mankind were delighted to find him defied and insulted by a new name, not yet considered as any one's rival. If Christina, as is said, commended the "Defence of the People," her purpose must be to torment Salmasius, who was then at her Court; for neither her civil station nor her natural character could dispose her to favour the doctrine, who was by birth a queen, and by temper despotick.

That Salmasius was, from the appearance of Milton's book, treated with neglect, there is not much proof; but to a man so long accustomed to admiration, a little praise of his antagonist would be sufficiently offensive, and might incline him to leave Sweden, from which, however, he was dismissed, not with any mark of contempt, but with a train of attendance scarce less than regal.

He prepared a reply, which, left as it was imperfect, was published by his son in the year of the Restauration. In the beginning, being probably most in pain for his Latinity,

<sup>1</sup> *Life of John Milton* (Toland), 1699, p. 102, but no confirmation has been found, and the Council books, where thanks only are given to Milton for his book, do not support Toland's assertion further than that a money reward was suggested, but cancelled. For copy of the Order in Council, &c. see *M. M.* vol. iv. p. 321.

he endeavours to defend his use of the word *persona*; but, if I remember right, he misses a better authority than any that he has found, that of Juvenal in his fourth satire:

“—Quid agis cum dira & fœdior omni  
Crimine *Persona* est?”

As Salmasius reproached Milton with losing his eyes in the quarrel, Milton delighted himself with the belief that he had shortened Salmasius's life, and both perhaps with more malignity than reason. Salmasius died at the Spa, Sept. 3, 1653; and as controvertists are commonly said to be killed by their last dispute, Milton was flattered with the credit of destroying him.

Cromwell had now dismissed the parliament by the authority of which he had destroyed monarchy, and commenced monarch himself, under the title of protector, but with kingly and more than kingly power. That his authority was lawful, never was pretended; he himself founded his right only in necessity; but Milton, having now tasted the honey of publick employment, would not return to hunger and philosophy, but, continuing to exercise his office under a manifest usurpation, betrayed to his power that liberty which he had defended. Nothing can be more just than that rebellion should end in slavery; that he, who had justified the murder of his king, for some acts which to him seemed unlawful, should now sell his services, and his flatteries, to a tyrant, of whom it was evident that he could do nothing lawful.

He had now been blind for some years;<sup>1</sup> but his vigour of intellect was such, that he was not disabled to discharge

<sup>1</sup> See a translation of the finest and most touching of all Milton's Latin letters, the *Epistle to Leonard Philaras*, describing the gradual loss of his sight and his present state, with reference to consulting a celebrated French physician and oculist, strongly recommended by Philaras, an Athenian, then in London. *M. M.* vol. iv. p. 640.

his office of Latin secretary, or continue his controversies. His mind was too eager to be diverted, and too strong to be subdued.

About this time<sup>1</sup> his first wife died in childbed, having left him three daughters. As he probably did not much love her, he did not long continue the appearance of lamenting her; but after a short time married Catherine, the daughter of one captain Woodcock of Hackney; a woman doubtless educated in opinions like his own. She died within a year, of childbirth, or some distemper that followed it; and her husband has honoured her memory with a poor sonnet.

The first Reply to Milton's "Defensio Populi" was published in 1651, called "Apologia pro Rege & Populo Anglicano, contra Johannis Polypragmatici (alias Miltoni) defensionem destructivam Regis & Populi." Of this the author was not known; but Milton and his nephew Philips, under whose name he published an answer so much corrected by him that it might be called his own, imputed it to Bramhal;<sup>2</sup> and, knowing him no friend to regicides, thought themselves at liberty to treat him as if they had known what they only suspected.

Next year appeared "Regii Sanguinis clamor ad Cælum."

<sup>1</sup> "My daughter Deborah was born the 2nd of May, being Sunday, somewhat before 3 of the clock in the morning, 1652. My wife, hir Mother, dyed about 3 days after, and my son about 6 weeks after his mother. Katherin, my daughter, by Katherin, my second wife, was borne ye 19th of October between 5 and 6 in the morning, and dyed ye 17th of March following, 6 weeks after hir mother, who dyed ye 3rd of Feb. 1657." M.S. entries in Milton's Bible, now in the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> Sonnet XXIII, Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. John Bramhall (1593-1663), Bishop of Londonderry, and after the Restoration, Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of Ireland. He published various works, and was a great antagonist of Hobbes. At the time of the publication of the *Apologia* he was an exile in Antwerp. The real author was certainly John Rowland. M. M. vol. iv. p. 347-536.



Of this the author was Peter du Moulin,<sup>1</sup> who was afterwards prebendary of Canterbury; but Morus, or More, a French minister, having the care of its publication, was treated as the writer by Milton in his "Defensio Secunda,"<sup>2</sup> and overwhelmed by such violence of invective, that he began to shrink under the tempest, and gave his persecutors the means of knowing the true author. Du Moulin was now in great danger; but Milton's pride operated against his malignity; and both he and his friends were more willing that Du Moulin should escape than that he should be convicted of mistake.

In this second Defence he shews that his eloquence is not merely satirical; the rudeness of his invective is equalled by the grossness of his flattery. "Deserimur, Cromuelle, tu solis superes, ad te summa nostrarum rerum rediit, in te solo consistit, insuperabili tuæ virtuti cedimus cuncti, nemine vel obloquente, nisi qui æquales inæqualis ipse honores sibi quærit, aut digniori concessos invidet, aut non intelligit nihil esse in societate hominum magis vel Deo gratum, vel rationi consentaneum, esse in civitate nihil æquius, nihil utilius, quam potiri rerum dignissimum.

<sup>1</sup> Peter du Moulin D.D. (1600-1684). Educated at Leyden, he was so far a naturalized Englishman as to be Rector of Wheldrake, near York. An intense Royalist and Episcopalian, he wrote a series of books, of which this was one, to maintain the cause of Charles II. and discredit the Commonwealth among continental Protestants. *M. M.* vol. v. pp. 216-218.

<sup>2</sup> *Second Defence for the English People, by John Milton*, Englishman, in reply to an Infamous Book entitled *Cry of the King's blood to Heaven against the English Parricides*. London, 1654. In this book Milton propounds his favourite idea, that in every age of great national action it is highly important that there should be some who, not partaking directly in such action, should look on and worthily appreciate it, lending their powers for the description and celebration of what has been done, and for the defence and exposition of what the men of action may intend to do. Its greatest interest lies in the passages of autobiography it contains. *M. M.* vol iv. p. 580, *et seq.* See next page, n. 2.

Eum te agnoscunt omnes, Cromuelle, ea tu civis maximus et gloriosissimus,<sup>1</sup> dux publici consilii, exercituum fortissimorum imperator, pater patriæ gessisti. Sic tu spontanea bonorum omnium et animitus missa voce salutaris."

Cæsar, when he assumed the perpetual dictatorship, had not more servile or more elegant flattery. A translation may shew its servility; but its elegance is less attainable. Having exposed the unskilfulness or selfishness of the former government, "We were left," says Milton, "to ourselves: the whole national interest fell into your hands, and subsists only in your abilities. To your virtue, overpowering and resistless, every man gives way, except some who, without equal qualifications, aspire to equal honours, who envy the distinctions of merit greater than their own, or who have yet to learn, that in the coalition of human society nothing is more pleasing to God, or more agreeable to reason, than that the highest mind should have the sovereign power. Such, Sir, are you by general confession; such are the things atchieved by you, the greatest and most glorious of our countrymen, the director of our public councils, the leader of unconquered armies, the father of your country; for by that title does every good man hail you, with sincere and voluntary praise."

Next year, having defended all that wanted defence, he found leisure to defend himself.<sup>2</sup> He undertook his own vindication against More, whom he declares in his title to be justly called the author of the "*Regii Sanguinis clamor*."

<sup>1</sup> It may be doubted whether *gloriosissimus* be here used with Milton's boasted purity. *Res gloriosa* is an *illustrious thing*; but *vir gloriosus* is commonly a *braggart*, as in *miles gloriosus*.—JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> In a small volume of 204 pages, entitled, *Joannis Miltoni, Angli. Pro se Defensio contra Alexandrum Morum, Ecclesiasten, Libelli famosi, cui titulus 'Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Cælum adversus Parricidas Anglicanos,' authorem recte dictum. Londini, Typis Newcomianis. 1653. M. M. vol. v. p. 108.*



In this there is no want of vehemence nor eloquence, nor does he forget his wonted wit. "Morus es? an Momus? an uterque idem est?" He then remembers that *Morus* is Latin for a Mulberry-tree, and hints at the known transformation:

"—Poma alba ferebat  
Quæ post nigra tulit Morus."

With this piece ended his controversies; and he from this time gave himself up to his private studies and his civil employment.

As secretary to the Protector he is supposed to have written the Declaration of the reasons for a war with Spain. His agency was considered as of great importance; for when a treaty with Sweden was artfully suspended, the delay was publicly imputed to Mr. Milton's indisposition; and the Swedish agent was provoked to express his wonder, that only one man in England could write Latin, and that man blind.<sup>1</sup>

Being now forty-seven years old, and seeing himself disencumbered from external interruptions, he seems to have recollected his former purposes, and to have resumed three great works which he had planned for his future employment: an epick poem, the history of his country, and a dictionary of the Latin tongue.

To collect a dictionary, seems a work of all others least practicable in a state of blindness, because it depends upon perpetual and minute inspection and collation. Nor would Milton probably have begun it, after he had lost his eyes; but, having had it always before him, he continued it, says Philips,<sup>2</sup> *almost to his dying-day; but the papers were*

<sup>1</sup> Whitelocke's Memorials, 6th May, 1656, ed. 1732, p. 645. See *M. M.* v. 240.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Life of Milton*. Godwin's *Lives*, p. 375.

so discomposed and deficient, that they could not be fitted for the press. The compilers of the Latin dictionary, printed at Cambridge, had the use of those collections in three folios; but what was their fate afterwards is not known.<sup>1</sup>

To compile a history from various authors, when they can only be consulted by other eyes, is not easy, nor possible, but with more skilful and attentive help than can be commonly obtained; and it was probably the difficulty of consulting and comparing that stopped Milton's narrative at the Conquest; a period at which affairs were not yet very intricate, nor authors very numerous.

For the subject of his epick poem, after much deliberation, *long chusing, and beginning late*, he fixed upon "*Paradise Lost*;" a design so comprehensive, that it could be justified only by success. He had once designed to celebrate King Arthur, as he hints in his verses to Mansus; but *Arthur was reserved, says Fenton, to another destiny*.<sup>2</sup>

It appears, by some sketches of poetical projects left in manuscript, and to be seen in a library at Cambridge,<sup>3</sup> that he had digested his thoughts on this subject into one of those wild dramas which were anciently called Mysteries; and Philips had seen what he terms part of a

<sup>1</sup> The *Cambridge Dictionary*, published in 4to, 1693, is a copy, with some small additions, of that of Dr. Adam Littleton, in 1685, by sundry persons, of whom there is reason to believe that Edward Philips was one. P. Cunningham, vol. i. p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> See Blackmore's once famous but now forgotten poem *Prince Arthur*, pub. 1695.

<sup>3</sup> This volume, kept under a glass case as one of the most valuable curiosities of the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, is a thin folio bound in red morocco and inscribed on the back *Poemata Miltoni Manuscripta*. These manuscripts were collected by Charles Mason, a Fellow of Trinity, and bound and presented (1736) to the College by another Fellow, Thomas Clarke, afterwards of the Middle Temple, "desiring them to be preserved with the respect due to them." The most interesting contents of this volume are fully described by Masson. *M. M.* vol. ii. pp. 103-121.

,<sup>1</sup> beginning with the first ten lines of Satan's address to the Sun. These Mysteries consist of allegorical ; such as *Justice, Mercy, Faith*. Of the tragedy or of "Paradise Lost" there are two plans :

## The Persons.

of Angels.  
ly Love.

{ with the Serpent.  
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ice,  
iers ; } Mutes.

## The Persons.

Moses.  
Divine Justice, Wisdom,  
Heavenly Love.  
The Evening Star, Hesperus.  
Chorus of Angels.  
Lucifer.  
Adam.  
Eve.  
Conscience.  
Labour,  
Sickness,  
Discontent,  
Ignorance,  
Fear,  
Death.  
Faith.  
Hope.  
Charity.

} Mutes.

*Paradise Lost.*

## The Persons.

s, *ωρολογίζει*, recounting how he assumed his true hat it corrupts not, because it is with God in the declares the like of Enoch and Elijah ; besides ty of the place, that certain pure winds, dews, and preserves it from corruption ; whence exhorts to the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Milton* in Godwin's *Lives*, p. 376.

sight of God ; tells, they cannot see Adam in the state of innocence, by reason of their sin.

Justice, }  
 Mercy, } debating what should become of man, if he fall  
 Wisdom, }

Chorus of Angels singing a hymn of the Creation.

#### ACT II.

Heavenly Love.

Evening Star.

Chorus sing the marriage-song, and describe Paradise.

#### ACT III.

Lucifer, contriving Adam's ruin.

Chorus fears for Adam, and relates Lucifer's rebellion and fall.

#### ACT IV.

Adam, }  
 Eve, } fallen.

Conscience cites them to God's examination.

Chorus bewails, and tells the good Adam has lost.

#### ACT V.

Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise.

— — — presented by an angel with

Labour, Grief, Hatred, Envy, War, Famine, }  
 Pestilence, Sickness, Discontent, Ignorance, } Mutes.  
 Fear, Death, }

To whom he gives their names. Likewise Winter, Heat, Tempest, &c.

Faith, }  
 Hope, } comfort him, and instruct him.  
 Charity, }

Chorus briefly concludes.



Such was his first design, which could have produced only an allegory, or mystery. The following sketch seems to have attained more maturity.

Adam unparadised :

The angel Gabriel, either descending or entering ; shewing, since this globe was created, his frequency as much on earth as in heaven ; describes Paradise. Next, the Chorus, shewing the reason of his coming to keep his watch in Paradise, after Lucifer's rebellion, by command from God ; and withal expressing his desire to see and know more concerning this excellent new creature, man. The angel Gabriel, as by his name signifying a prince of power, tracing Paradise with a more free office, passes by the station of the Chorus, and, desired by them, relates what he knew of man ; as the creation of Eve, with their love and marriage. After this, Lucifer appears ; after his overthrow, bemoans himself, seeks revenge on man. The Chorus prepare resistance at his first approach. At last, after discourse of enmity on either side, he departs : whereat the Chorus sings of the battle and victory in heaven, against him and his accomplices : as before, after the first act, was sung a hymn of the creation. Here again may appear Lucifer, relating and insulting <sup>1</sup> in what he had done to the destruction of man. Man next, and Eve having by this time been seduced by the Serpent, appears confusedly covered with leaves. Conscience, in a shape, accuses him ; Justice cites him to the place whither Jehovah called for him. In the mean while, the Chorus entertains the stage, and is informed by some angel the manner of the Fall. Here the Chorus bewails Adam's fall ; Adam then and Eve return ; accuse one another ; but especially Adam lays the blame to his wife ; is stubborn in his

<sup>1</sup> Surely a misprint for "exulting."

offence. Justice appears, reasons with him, convinces him. The Chorus admonisheth Adam, and bids him beware Lucifer's example of impenitence. The angel is sent to banish them out of Paradise; but before causes to pass before his eyes, in shapes, a mask of all the evils of this life and world. He is humbled, relents, despairs: at last appears Mercy, comforts him, promises the Messiah; then calls in Faith, Hope, and Charity; instructs him; he repents, gives God the glory, submits to his penalty. The Chorus briefly concludes. Compare this with the former draught."

These are very imperfect rudiments of "Paradise Lost;" but it is pleasant to see great works in their seminal state, pregnant with latent possibilities of excellence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than to trace their gradual growth and expansion, and to observe how they are sometimes suddenly advanced by accidental hints, and sometimes slowly improved by steady meditation.

✓ Invention is almost the only literary labour which blindness cannot obstruct, and therefore he naturally solaced his solitude by the indulgence of his fancy, and the melody of his numbers. He had done what he knew to be necessarily previous to poetical excellence; he had made himself acquainted with *seemly arts and affairs*; <sup>1</sup> his comprehension was extended by various knowledge, and his memory stored with intellectual treasures. He was skilful in many languages, and had by reading and composition attained the full mastery of his own. He would have wanted little help from books, had he retained the power of perusing them.

But while his greater designs were advancing, having now, like many other authors, caught the love of publication, he amused himself, as he could, with little productions. He sent to the press (1658) a manuscript of

<sup>1</sup> Milton's Pamphlet *The Reason of Church government urged against the Prelaty*, 1641, for extract see M. M. vol. ii. p. 389.

Raleigh, called the "Cabinet Council;"<sup>1</sup> and next year gratified his malevolence to the clergy, by a "Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Cases," and "The Means of removing Hirelings out of the Church."<sup>2</sup>

Oliver was now dead; Richard was constrained to resign: the system of extemporary government, which had been held together only by force, naturally fell into fragments when that force was taken away; and Milton saw himself and his cause in equal danger. But he had still hope of doing something. He wrote letters, which Toland has published, to such men as he thought friends to the new commonwealth; and even in the year of the Restoration he *bated no jot of heart or hope*,<sup>3</sup> but was fantastical enough to think that the nation, agitated as it was, might be settled by a pamphlet, called "A ready and easy way to establish a Free Commonwealth;" which was, however, enough considered to be both seriously and ludicrously answered.<sup>4</sup>

The obstinate enthusiasm of the commonwealthmen was

<sup>1</sup> This little volume contained about 200 pages, and was entitled, *The Cabinet Council; Containing the chief Arts of Empire, and Mysteries of State; Discabineted in Political and Polemical Aphorisms, grounded on Authority, and Experience; And illustrated with the choicest Examples and Historical Observations. By the Ever renowned Knight, Sir Walter Raleigh, published by John Milton, Esq.*

<sup>2</sup> The first of these Disestablishment Tracts was entitled, *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes: Shewing that it is not lawfull for any Power on Earth to Compel in matters of Religion.* 1659. The second was called, *Considerations touching the likeliest means to remove Hirelings out of the Church, &c.* 1659. M. M. vol. v. pp. 381, 605.

<sup>3</sup> Sonnet XXII.

<sup>4</sup> *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, and the Excellence thereof compared with the inconveniences and dangers of readmitting Kingship in this Nation*, 1660, was what would now be called a scheme of Decentralization or Systematic Local Government. This pamphlet had an immense immediate circulation, and a month later a new edition, "revised and enlarged," was published with the added motto, *Et nos Consilium dedimus syllæ; demus Populo nunc.* M. M. vol. v. p. 678.



very remarkable. When the King was apparently returning, Harrington,<sup>1</sup> with a few associates as fanatical as himself, used to meet, with all the gravity of political importance, to settle an equal government by rotation; and Milton, kicking when he could strike no longer, was foolish enough to publish, a few weeks before the Restoration, *Notes* upon a sermon preached by one Griffiths,<sup>2</sup> intituled, "The Fear of God and the King." To these notes an answer was written by L'Estrange,<sup>3</sup> in a pamphlet petulantly called "No blind Guides."<sup>3</sup>

But whatever Milton could write, or men of greater activity could do, the King was now about to be restored with the irresistible approbation of the people. He was therefore no longer secretary, and was consequently obliged to quit the house which he held by his office;<sup>4</sup> and proportioning his sense of danger to his opinion of the importance of his writings, thought it convenient to seek some shelter, and hid himself for a time in Bartholomew-Close by West Smithfield.

I cannot but remark a kind of respect, perhaps unconsciously, paid to this great man by his biographers: every house in which he resided is historically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect naming any place that he honoured by his presence.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James Harrington (1611-1677), a writer on government, and author of *Oceana*, was for a time Groom of the Bed-chamber to Charles I. and attended him on the scaffold. Matt. Arnold, p. 458.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Griffith, D.D. Chaplain to the late King.

<sup>3</sup> Roger L'Estrange (1616-1704), was a great pamphleteer. After the Restoration he was chief Censor of the Press for some time, and the official journalist of the reign of Charles II. He published a paper called the *Observer*.

<sup>4</sup> Milton was not dismissed from the Secretaryship till about April, 1660, but he had long ago, in December, 1651, left his lodgings in Whitehall for the Garden House in Petty France. *M. M.* vol. iv. p. 428.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson has omitted all mention of Milton's places of residence



The King, with lenity of which the world has had perhaps no other example, declined to be the judge or avenger of his own or his father's wrongs; and promised to admit into the Act of Oblivion all, except those whom the parliament should except; and the parliament doomed none to capital punishment but the wretches who had immediately co-operated in the murder of the King. Milton was certainly not one of them; he had only justified what they had done.

This justification was indeed sufficiently offensive; and (June 16) an order was issued to seize Milton's "Defence," and Goodwin's<sup>1</sup> "Obstructors of Justice," another book of the same tendency, and burn them by the common hangman. The attorney-general was ordered to prosecute the authors;<sup>2</sup> but Milton was not seized, nor perhaps very diligently pursued.

Not long after (August 19<sup>3</sup>) the flutter of innumerable bosoms was stilled by an act, which the King, that his mercy might want no recommendation of elegance, rather

during the Commonwealth. Early in 1649 he removed from his house in Holborn to lodgings at Spring Gardens, Charing Cross. In November, 1649, he was given lodgings at Whitehall, at the Scotland Yard end of the old palace. In December, 1651, he removed to "a pretty garden house in Petty France, in Westminster, next door to the lord Scudamore's, and opening into St. James's Park. Here he lived no less than eight years." (*Life of Milton*, E. Philips, 374.) This house (as No. 19, York Street), was in existence up to 1877. It was owned at the beginning of this century by Jeremy Bentham, who put up a tablet on it, with an inscription, "Sacred to Milton, Prince of Poets." *M. M.* vol. iv. p. 419.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679), a leading Independent minister and theologian, was made President of Magdalen College, Oxford, by Cromwell, and attended him on his deathbed. *Matt. Arnold*, p. 458.

<sup>2</sup> The newspapers of the time record the burning of copies of Milton's books at the Session house in the Old Bailey in September. *M. M.* vol. vi. pp. 181, 193.

<sup>3</sup> August 29, 1660.

called an *act of oblivion*<sup>1</sup> than of grace. Goodwin was named, with nineteen more, as incapacitated for any public trust; but of Milton there was no exception.

Of this tenderness shewn to Milton, the curiosity of mankind has not forborn to enquire the reason. Burnet thinks he was forgotten; but this is another instance which may confirm Dalrymple's observation, who says, "that whenever Burnet's narrations are examined, he appears to be mistaken."

Forgotten he was not; for his prosecution was ordered; it must be therefore by design that he was included in the general oblivion. He is said to have had friends in the House, such as Marvel,<sup>2</sup> Morrice, and Sir Thomas Clarges; and undoubtedly a man like him must have had influence. A very particular story of his escape is told by Richardson in his *Memoirs*,<sup>3</sup> which he received from Pope, as delivered by Betterton,<sup>4</sup> who might have heard it from Davenant.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was called the *Act of Free and General Pardon, Indemnity, and Oblivion*. It was based on a document brought from Charles to Monk, and produced by him in the two Houses with immense effect on May 1st, namely, the Declaration, dated from Breda, April 4th, entitled, *His Majesty's gracious Declaration to all his Loving Subjects*.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Marvell (1620-1678), the poet, then Member for Hull, according to Phillips, 'acted vigorously in his behalf and made a considerable party for him.' Sir Thomas Clarges was Monk's brother-in-law, and therefore enjoyed considerable influence at this time. Sir William Morrice, another of Monk's friends, was by his influence made Secretary of State, which post he held until 1668. *Firth Milton*, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Paradise Lost*, by J. Richardson, Father and Son. With a *Life of the Author*, and a *Discourse on the Poem*, by J. R. Sen. Lond. 1734. 8vo. And a portrait etched by Richardson.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Betterton (1635-1710), a celebrated actor when the stag regained popularity after the Restoration.

<sup>5</sup> Sir William Davenant (1605-1668), Poet laureate in succession to Ben Jonson. His chief poem was *Gondibert*, he was also a writer for the stage, and the manager of a theatre.

In the war between the King and Parliament, Davenant was made prisoner, and condemned to die; but was spared at the request of Milton. When the turn of success brought Milton into the like danger, Davenant repaid the benefit by appearing in his favour. Here is a reciprocation of generosity and gratitude so pleasing, that the tale makes its own way to credit. But if help were wanted, I know not where to find it. The danger of Davenant is certain from his own relation; but of his escape there is no account. Betterton's narration can be traced no higher; it is not known that he had it from Davenant. We are told that the benefit exchanged was life for life; but it seems not certain that Milton's life ever was in danger.<sup>1</sup> Goodwin, who had committed the same kind of crime, escaped with incapacitation; and as exclusion from publick trust is a punishment which the power of government can commonly inflict without the help of a particular law, it required no great interest to exempt Milton from a censure little more than verbal. Something may be reasonably ascribed to veneration and compassion; to veneration of his abilities, and compassion for his distresses, which made it fit to forgive his malice for his learning. He was now poor and blind; and who would pursue with violence an illustrious enemy, depressed by fortune, and disarmed by nature?

The publication of the act of oblivion put him in the same condition with his fellow-subjects. He was, however, upon some pretence not now known, in the custody of the serjeant in December; and, when he was released, upon his refusal of the fees demanded, he and the serjeant were called before the House. He was now safe within the

<sup>1</sup> Dec. 15, 1660, the House of Commons ordered that Milton, then in the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms, should be released on payment of the fees, and the largeness of the sum demanded (£150) makes it probable that he had been some time in prison. See *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 192.



shade of oblivion, and knew himself to be as much out of the power of a griping officer as any other man. How the question was determined is not known. Milton would hardly have contended, but that he knew himself to have right on his side.

He then removed to Jewin-street,<sup>1</sup> near Aldersgate-street; and being blind, and by no means wealthy, wanted a domestick companion and attendant; and therefore, by the recommendation of Dr. Paget, married<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Minshul, of a gentleman's family in Cheshire, probably without a fortune. All his wives were virgins; for he has declared that he thought it gross and indelicate to be a second husband: upon what other principles his choice was made, cannot now be known; but marriage afforded not much of his happiness. The first wife left him in disgust, and was brought back only by terror; the second, indeed, seems to have been more a favourite, but her life was short. The third, as Philips relates,<sup>3</sup> oppressed his children in his life-time, and cheated them at his death.

Soon after his marriage, according to an obscure story,<sup>4</sup> he was offered the continuance of his employment; and, being pressed by his wife to accept it, answered, "You, like other women, want to ride in your coach; my wish is to live and die an honest man." If he considered the Latin secretary as exercising any of the powers of government, he that had shared authority either with the parliament or Cromwell, might have forbore to talk very loudly

<sup>1</sup> In 1661.

<sup>2</sup> Feb. 24th, 1662-3. Milton's third wife was thirty-six years of age when he died, and she survived him about fifty-three years. For an interesting account of her, see *M. M.* vol. vi. pp. 728, 744-749.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Cunningham points out that this must be a slip of memory, for no such assertion is to be found in Philips. For a facsimile of Milton's signature at this marriage, see *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 475.

<sup>4</sup> *Richardson, Life*, prefixed to *Explanatory Notes on P. L.* p. c.



of his honesty; and if he thought the office purely ministerial, he certainly might have honestly retained it under the king. But this tale has too little evidence to deserve a disquisition; large offers and sturdy rejections are among the most common topicks of falsehood.

He had so much either of prudence or gratitude, that he forbore to disturb the new settlement with any of his political or ecclesiastical opinions, and from this time devoted himself to poetry and literature. Of his zeal for learning, in all its parts, he gave a proof by publishing, the next year (1661), "*Accidence commenced Grammar*;"<sup>1</sup> a little book which has nothing remarkable, but that its author, who had been lately defending the supreme powers of his country, and was then writing "*Paradise Lost*," could descend from his elevation to rescue children from the perplexity of grammatical confusion, and the trouble of lessons unnecessarily repeated.

About this time Elwood the quaker,<sup>2</sup> being recommended to him as one who would read Latin to him, for the advantage of his conversation; attended him every afternoon, except on Sundays. Milton, who, in his letter to Hartlib,<sup>3</sup> had declared, that *to read Latin with an English mouth is as ill a hearing as Law French*, required that Elwood should learn and practise the Italian pronunciation, which, he said, was necessary, if he would talk with foreigners. This seems to have been a task troublesome without use. There is little reason for preferring the Italian pronunciation to our own, except that it is more general; and to

<sup>1</sup> No copies of this have been found with an earlier date than 1669, and it is believed that Wood, who is the authority for the earlier date (1661), must have been mistaken. *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 642.

<sup>2</sup> See the *History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood, written by Himself.* Lond. 1714.

<sup>3</sup> *On Education: To Mr. Samuel Hartlib*; published as a thin 4to. tract June 5th, 1644; republished by Milton at the end of the second edition of his *Minor Poems* in 1673.

teach it to an Englishman is only to make him a foreigner at home. He who travels, if he speaks Latin, may so soon learn the sounds which every native gives it, that he need make no provision before his journey; and if strangers visit us, it is their business to practise such conformity to our modes as they expect from us in their own countries. Elwood complied with the directions, and improved himself by his attendance; for he relates,<sup>1</sup> that Milton, having a curious ear,<sup>2</sup> knew by his voice when he read what he did not understand, and would stop him, and *open the most difficult passages*.

In a short time he took a house in the *Artillery Walk*, leading to *Bunhill Fields*; the mention of which concludes the register of Milton's removals and habitations. He lived longer in this place than in any other.

He was now busied by "*Paradise Lost*."<sup>3</sup> Whence he drew the original design has been variously conjectured, by men who cannot bear to think themselves ignorant of that which, at last, neither diligence nor sagacity can discover. Some find the hint in an Italian tragedy. Voltaire tells a wild and unauthorised story of a farce seen by Milton in Italy,<sup>4</sup> which opened thus: *Let the Rainbow be*

<sup>1</sup> Life, pp. 131-135.

<sup>2</sup> Of Milton's "curious ear," Richardson says, "In relation to his love of music, and the effect it had upon his mind, I remember a story from a friend I was happy in many years, who loved to talk of Milton, as he often did. Milton hearing a lady sing finely, 'Now I will swear,' says he, 'this lady is handsome.' His ears were now eyes to him." p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Milton began the dictation of *Paradise Lost* in 1658. He was just about finishing it when the Plague broke out in June, 1665. In 1666, while the Great Fire was still smouldering, he began the printing.

<sup>4</sup> *L'Adamo, sacra rappresentazione*, by Andreini, an Italian poet and comedian (1578-1650), published, Milan, 1613 and 1617. It contained five Acts, with songs and choruses, and engravings from pictures by Proccacini, after each scene. The *Biog. Generale* states that so many copies of this play came to England that it became very scarce on the

*Idlestick of the Fiddle of Heaven*. It has been already<sup>1</sup> that the first conception was a tragedy or mystery, a narrative, but a dramatick work, which he is supposed to have begun to reduce to its present form about 1655) when he finished his dispute with the officers of the king.

Long before had promised to adorn his native country with a great performance, while he had yet perhaps no design, and was stimulated only by such expectations naturally arose from the survey of his attainments, and the consciousness of his powers. What he should make, it was difficult to determine. He was *long* *in, and began late*.<sup>2</sup>

While he was obliged to divide his time between his studies and affairs of state, his poetical labour must have been often interrupted; and perhaps he did little in that busy time than construct the narrative, adjust the episodes, proportion the parts, accumulate images and incidents, and treasure in his memory, or preserve in

note. Voltaire, *Œuvres*, vol. viii. p. 353, says, "It is not astonishing that having sought with diligence in England for everything relating to our countryman, I have discovered some circumstances not generally known."

After describing the fantastic absurdity of the play, at the proof of which, at Milan, he was told Milton was present, Voltaire continues, "Milton discovered beside the absurdity of this work, the hidden beauty of the subject. In things where all seems vulgar and absurd, he often finds a great side only perceptible to men of genius, the dance of the seven mortal sins with the Devil is assuredly the height of fancy and folly; but the world made miserable by the weakness of man, the blessing and punishment of the Creator, the source of our fortunes and our crimes, are objects worthy of the boldest pencil, and he is in this subject a sad and solemn sublimity not unsuited to his poetical imagination."

<sup>1</sup> *supr.* p. 130. The *Jottings of Subjects*, which contain the first plan of *Paradise Lost*, were almost certainly written just after his return from Italy.

<sup>2</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book ix. line 26, Ald. M. vol. ii. p. 129.



writing, such hints as books or meditation would supply. Nothing particular is known of his intellectual operations while he was a statesman; for, having every help and accommodation at hand, he had no need of uncommon expedients.

Being driven from all publick stations, he is yet too great not to be traced by curiosity to his retirement; where he has been found by Mr. Richardson,<sup>1</sup> the fondest of his admirers, sitting *before his door in a grey coat of coarse cloth, in warm sultry weather, to enjoy the fresh air; and so, as well as in his own room, receiving the visits of people of distinguished parts as well as quality.* His visitors of high quality must now be imagined to be few; but men of parts might reasonably court the conversation of a man so generally illustrious, that foreigners are reported, by Wood, to have visited the house in Bread-street where he was born.<sup>2</sup>

According to another account,<sup>3</sup> he was seen in a small house, *neatly enough dressed in black cloaths, sitting in a room hung with rusty green; pale but not cadaverous, with chalkstones in his hands. He said, that if it were not for the gout, his blindness would be tolerable.*

In the intervals of his pain, being made unable to use the common exercises, he used to swing in a chair, and sometimes played upon an organ.

He was now confessedly and visibly employed upon his poem, of which the progress might be noted by those with whom he was familiar; for he was obliged, when he had composed as many lines as his memory would conveniently retain, to employ some friend in writing them, having, at

<sup>1</sup> Richardson, *Life*, p. iv.

<sup>2</sup> This was before the publication of *Paradise Lost*, for Milton's house in Bread Street was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666, to Milton's great loss.

<sup>3</sup> Richardson, *Life*, p. iv.



least for part of the time, no regular attendant. This gave opportunity to observations and reports.

Mr. Philips observes,<sup>1</sup> that there was a very remarkable circumstance in the composure of "Paradise Lost," "which I have a particular reason," says he, "to remember; for whereas I had the perusal of it from the very beginning, for some years, as I went from time to time to visit him, in parcels of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time (which, being written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing), having, as the summer came on, not been shewed any for a considerable while, and desiring the reason thereof, was answered, that his vein never happily flowed but from the Autumnal Equinox to the Vernal; and that whatever he attempted at other times was never to his satisfaction, though he courted his fancy never so much; so that, in all the years he was about this poem, he may be said to have spent half his time therein."

Upon this relation Toland remarks,<sup>2</sup> that in his opinion Philips has mistaken the time of the year; for Milton, in his Elegies,<sup>3</sup> declares that with the advance of the Spring he feels the increase of his poetical force, *redeunt in carmina vires*. To this it is answered, that Philips could hardly mistake time so well marked; and it may be added, that Milton might find different times of the year favourable to different parts of life. Mr. Richardson<sup>4</sup> conceives it impossible that *such a work should be suspended for six months, or for one. It may go on faster or slower, but it must go on*. By what necessity it must continually go on, or why it might not be laid aside and resumed, it is not easy to discover.

This dependance of the soul upon the seasons, those temporary and periodical ebbs and flows of intellect, may,

<sup>1</sup> Godwin, *Life*, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Milton*, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> *Elegia Quinta*, line 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Exp. Notes*, p. cxiii.

I suppose, justly be derided as the fumes of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur astris*. The author that thinks himself weather-bound will find, with a little help from hellebore,<sup>1</sup> that he is only idle or exhausted. But while this notion has possession of the head, it produces the inability which it supposes. Our powers owe much of their energy to our hopes; *possunt quia posse videntur*. When success seems attainable, diligence is enforced; but when it is admitted that the faculties are suppressed by a cross wind, or a cloudy sky, the day is given up without resistance; for who can contend with the course of Nature?

From such prepossessions Milton seems not to have been free. There prevailed in his time an opinion that the world was in its decay,<sup>2</sup> and that we have had the misfortune to be produced in the decrepitude of Nature. It was suspected that the whole creation languished, that neither trees nor animals had the height or bulk of their predecessors, and that every thing was daily sinking by gradual diminution. Milton appears to suspect that souls partake of the general degeneracy, and is not without some fear that his book is to be written in *an age too late*<sup>3</sup> for heroick poesy.

Another opinion wanders about the world, and sometimes finds reception among wise men; an opinion that

<sup>1</sup> The rhizome of *Veratrum Album*, the White Hellebore of the Greeks is an irritant narcotic poison. It was much used by the ancients in mental diseases. Mr. Firth notes that it is mentioned in Horace (Sat. ii. 382; Juvenal, xiii. 97); and Drayton, (*Polyolbion*, xiii. "and melancholy cures by sovereign Hellebore.")

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cunningham here remarks that the first person who printed such an opinion in England was Dr. Godfrey Goodman, in his *Fall of Man, or the Corruption of Nature proved by the light of our Natural Reason*. Lond. 1616. A glance at this sorrowful performance should convince the pessimists of our day of a lack of originality in their lamentations over the hardness of the times, the decay of the nation, and the universal degeneracy of the age.

<sup>3</sup> From Milton's Tract, *The reason of Church government urged against Prelaty*.

restrains the operations of the mind to particular regions, and supposes that a luckless mortal may be born in a degree of latitude too high or too low for wisdom or for wit. From this fancy, wild as it is, he had not wholly cleared his head, when he feared lest the *climate* of his country might be *too cold* for flights of imagination.

Into a mind already occupied by such fancies, another not more reasonable might easily find its way. He that could fear lest his genius had fallen upon too old a world, or too chill a climate, might consistently magnify to himself the influence of the seasons, and believe his faculties to be vigorous only half the year.

His submission to the seasons was at least more reasonable than his dread of decaying Nature, or a frigid zone; for general causes must operate uniformly in a general abatement of mental power; if less could be performed by the writer, less likewise would content the judges of his work. Among this lagging race of frosty grovellers he might still have risen into eminence by producing something which *they should not willingly let die*. However inferior to the heroes who were born in better ages, he might still be great among his contemporaries, with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of posterity. He might still be the giant of the pygmies, the one-eyed monarch of the blind.

Of his artifices of study, or particular hours of composition, we have little account, and there was perhaps little to be told. Richardson, who seems to have been very diligent in his enquiries, but discovers always a wish to find Milton discriminated from other men, relates,<sup>1</sup> that he would sometimes lie awake whole nights, but not a verse could he make; and on a sudden his poetical faculty would rush upon him with an *impetus* or *æstrum*, and his laughter was immediately called to secure what came. At

<sup>1</sup> *Exp. Notes*, p. cxiv.



other times he would dictate perhaps forty lines in a breath, and then reduce them to half the number."

These bursts of lights, and involutions of darkness; these transient and involuntary excursions and retrocessions of invention, having some appearance of deviation from the common train of Nature, are eagerly caught by the lovers of a wonder. Yet something of this inequality happens to every man in every mode of exertion, manual or mental. The mechanick cannot handle his hammer and his file at all times with equal dexterity; there are hours, he knows not why, when *his hand is out*. By Mr. Richardson's relation, casually conveyed, much regard cannot be claimed. That, in his intellectual hour, Milton called for his daughter *to secure what came*, may be questioned; for unluckily it happens to be known that his daughters were never taught to write; nor would he have been obliged, as is universally confessed, to have have employed any casual visiter in disburthening his memory, if his daughter could have performed the office.

The story of reducing his exuberance has been told of other authors, and, though doubtless true of every fertile and copious mind, seems to have been gratuitously transferred to Milton.

What he has told us, and we cannot now know more, is, that he composed much of his poem in the night and morning, I suppose before his mind was disturbed with common business; and that he poured out with great fluency his *unpremeditated verse*. Versification, free, like his, from the distresses of rhyme, must, by a work so long, be made prompt and habitual; and, when his thoughts were once adjusted, the words would come at his command.

At what particular times of his life the parts of his work were written, cannot often be known. The beginning of the third book shews that he had lost his sight; in *the Introduction* to the seventh, that the return of the



King had clouded him with discountenance; and that he was offended by the licentious festivity of the Restoration. There are no other internal notes of time. Milton, being now cleared from all effects of his disloyalty, had nothing required from him but the common duty of living in quiet, to be rewarded with the common right of protection: but this, which, when he sculked from the approach of his King, was perhaps more than he hoped, seems not to have satisfied him; for no sooner is he safe, than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, and with darkness and with danger compass'd round*.<sup>1</sup> This darkness, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion: but to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjust. He was fallen indeed on *evil days*; the time was come in which regicides could no longer boast their wickedness. But of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain, required impudence at least equal to his other powers; Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow, that he never spared any asperity of reproach or brutality of insolence.

But the charge itself seems to be false; for it would be hard to recollect any reproach cast upon him, either serious or ludicrous, through the whole remaining part of his life. He pursued his studies, or his amusements, without persecution, molestation, or insult. Such is the reverence paid to great abilities, however misused: they who contemplated in Milton the scholar and the wit, were contented to forget the reviler of his King.

When the plague (1665) raged in London, Milton took refuge at Chalfont in Bucks; where Elwood,<sup>2</sup> who had taken the house for him, first saw a complete copy of "Paradise Lost," and, having perused it, said to him, "Thou hast said a great deal upon 'Paradise Lost;' what hast thou to say upon 'Paradise Found?'"

<sup>1</sup> *Par. Lost*, vii. lines 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Ellwood*, p. 233.

Next year, when the danger of infection had ceased, he returned to Bunhill-fields, and designed the publication of his poem. A license was necessary, and he could expect no great kindness from a chaplain of the archbishop of Canterbury. He seems, however, to have been treated with tenderness; for though objections were made to particular passages, and among them to the simile of the sun eclipsed in the first book, yet the license was granted; and he sold his copy, April 27, 1667, to Samuel Simmons,<sup>1</sup> for an immediate payment of five pounds, with a stipulation to receive five pounds more when thirteen hundred should be sold of the first edition: and again, five pounds after the sale of the same number of the second edition: and another five pounds after the same sale of the third. None of the three editions were to be extended beyond fifteen hundred copies.

The first edition was ten books, in a small quarto. The titles were varied from year to year; and an advertisement and the arguments of the books were omitted in some copies, and inserted in others.<sup>2</sup>

The sale gave him in two years a right to his second payment, for which the receipt was signed April 26, 1669. The second edition was not given till 1674; it was printed in small octavo; and the number of books was increased to twelve, by a division of the seventh and twelfth;<sup>3</sup> and some other small improvements were made. The third

<sup>1</sup> The original of this famous agreement is in the British Museum, having been presented to that institution in 1852 by Samuel Rogers, the poet, who had purchased it in 1831 for a hundred guineas from Mr. Pickering the publisher. It had come down in the possession of the famous publishing family of the Tonsons. The signature, however, is not actually in Milton's own handwriting. See *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 511, for facsimile, &c.

<sup>2</sup> For a full account of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, with its curious trade history, see *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 621.

<sup>3</sup> A slip, or printer's error, for "tenth."

edition was published in 1678; and the widow, to whom the copy was then to devolve, sold all her claims to Simmons for eight pounds, according to her receipt given Dec. 21, 1680. Simmons had already agreed to transfer the whole right to Brabazon Aylmer for twenty-five pounds; and Aylmer sold to Jacob Tonson half, August 17, 1683, and half, March 24, 1690, at a price considerably enlarged. In the history of "*Paradise Lost*" a deduction thus minute will rather gratify than fatigue.

The slow sale and tardy reputation of this poem have been always mentioned as evidences of neglected merit, and of the uncertainty of literary fame; and enquiries have been made, and conjectures offered, about the causes of its long obscurity and late reception. But has the case been truly stated? Have not lamentation and wonder been lavished on an evil that was never felt?

That in the reigns of Charles and James the "*Paradise Lost*" received no publick acclamations, is readily confessed. Wit and literature were on the side of the Court: and who that solicited favour or fashion would venture to praise the defender of the regicides? All that he himself could think his due, from *evil tongues* in *evil days*, was that reverential silence which was generously preserved. But it cannot be inferred that his poem was not read, or not, however unwillingly, admired.<sup>1</sup>

The sale, if it be considered, will justify the publick. Those who have no power to judge of past times but by their own, should always doubt their conclusions. The call for books was not in Milton's age what it is in the present. To read was not then a general amusement; neither traders, nor often gentlemen, thought themselves disgraced by ignorance. The women had not then aspired to literature, nor

<sup>1</sup> Dryden's lines on Milton ("Three poets in three distant ages born"), were written for the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*, to be placed beneath Milton's portrait.



was every house supplied with a closet of knowledge. Those, indeed, who professed learning, were not less learned than at any other time; but of that middle race of students who read for pleasure or accomplishment, and who buy the numerous products of modern typography, the number was then comparatively small. To prove the paucity of readers, it may be sufficient to remark, that the nation had been satisfied, from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakspeare, which probably did not together make one thousand copies.

The sale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in opposition to so much recent enmity, and to a style of versification new to all and disgusting to many, was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius. The demand did not immediately increase; for many more readers than were supplied at first the nation did not afford. Only three thousand were sold in eleven years; for it forced its way without assistance: its admirers did not dare to publish their opinion; and the opportunities now given of attracting notice by advertisements were then very few; the means of proclaiming the publication of new books have been produced by that general literature which now pervades the nation through all its ranks.

But the reputation and price of the copy still advanced, till the Revolution put an end to the secrecy of love, and "*Paradise Lost*" broke into open view with sufficient security of kind reception.<sup>1</sup>

Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked

<sup>1</sup> A German translation of *Paradise Lost* was published in 1682; a Latin translation of the first book in 1686; and in 1688 came Tonson's sumptuous subscription folio. A sixth edition of *Paradise Lost*, with an elaborate commentary, was published in 1695. Addison's criticisms in the *Spectator* began in 1712, when nine editions of *Paradise Lost* had been published. Firth, p. 119.



his reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting, without impatience, the vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation.

In the mean time he continued his studies, and supplied the want of sight by a very odd expedient, of which Philips gives the following account :

Mr. Philips tells us,<sup>1</sup> "that though our author had daily about him one or other to read, some persons of man's estate, who, of their own accord, greedily caught at the opportunity of being his readers, that they might as well reap the benefit of what they read to him, as oblige him by the benefit of their reading; and others of younger years were sent by their parents to the same end: yet excusing only the eldest daughter, by reason of her bodily infirmity, and difficult utterance of speech, (which, to say truth, I doubt was the principal cause of excusing her), the other two were condemned to the performance of reading, and exactly pronouncing of all the languages of whatever book he should, at one time or other, think fit to peruse, viz. the Hebrew (and I think the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spanish, and French. All which sorts of books to be confined to read, without understanding one word, must needs be a trial of patience almost beyond endurance. Yet it was endured by both for a long time, though the irksomeness of this employment could not be always concealed, but broke out more and more into expressions of uneasiness; so that at length they were all, even the eldest also, sent out to learn some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture, that are proper for women to learn; particularly embroidery in gold or silver."

In the scene of misery which this mode of intellectual

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Milton.* Godwin's *Lives*, p. 380.

labour sets before our eyes, it is hard to determine whether the daughters or the father are most to be lamented. A language not understood can never be so read as to give pleasure, and very seldom so as to convey meaning. If few men would have had resolution to write books with such embarrassments, few likewise would have wanted ability to find some better expedient.

Three years after his "Paradise Lost" (1667), he published his "History of England,"<sup>1</sup> comprising the whole fable of Geoffry of Monmouth, and continued to the Norman invasion. Why he should have given the first part, which he seems not to believe, and which is universally rejected, it is difficult to conjecture. The style is harsh; but it has something of rough vigour, which perhaps may often strike, though it cannot please.

On this history the licenser again fixed his claws, and before he would transmit it to the press tore out several parts. Some censures of the Saxon monks were taken away, lest they should be applied to the modern clergy; and a character of the Long Parliament, and Assembly of Divines, was excluded; of which the author gave a copy to the earl of Anglesea, and which, being afterwards published, has since been inserted in its proper place.

The same year were printed<sup>2</sup> "Paradise Regained,"<sup>3</sup> and "Sampson Agonistes,"<sup>4</sup> a tragedy written in imitation of the Ancients, and never designed by the author for the stage. As these poems were published by another bookseller, it has been asked, whether Simmons was discouraged from receiving them by the slow sale of the former. Why

<sup>1</sup> This history was chiefly written in 1648, though not published till 1670. It is adorned with the fine portrait of Milton, by Faithorne, the most authentic and impressive portrait of the poet in his later life.

<sup>2</sup> The volume containing these poems was dated 1671, but it was licensed July 2nd, 1670, and may probably have appeared late in 1670.

<sup>3</sup> *Ald. M.* vol. ii. p. 285.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 1.

a writer changed his business a hundred times at least far from hoping to ~~become~~ ~~wealthy~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~end~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~year~~ ~~sells~~ ~~thirteen~~ ~~hundred~~ ~~copies~~ ~~of~~ ~~a~~ ~~volume~~ ~~in~~ ~~three~~ ~~months~~ ~~bought~~ ~~for~~ ~~two~~ ~~payments~~ ~~of~~ ~~five~~ ~~pounds~~ ~~each~~ ~~the~~ ~~author~~ ~~reason~~ ~~to~~ ~~repent~~ ~~his~~ ~~purchase~~.

When Milton showed *Paradise Regained* to Elwood, "This," said he, "is owing to you for you put it in my head by the question you put to me at Chesham when otherwise I had not thought of it."

His last poetical offspring was his favourite. It was not, as Elwood<sup>1</sup> relates, ~~entirely~~ ~~to~~ ~~hear~~ ~~"Paradise Lost"~~ preferred to "*Paradise Regained*." Many causes may vitiate a writer's judgement of his own works. In that which has cost him much labour he sees a great value because he is unwilling to think that he has been engaged in vain; what has been produced without conscious effort is considered with delight, as a proof of vigorous faculties and fertile invention; and the last work, whatever it be, has necessarily most of the grace of novelty. Milton, however it happened, had this prejudice, and led it to himself.

To that multiplicity of attainments, and extent of comprehension, that entitle this great author to our veneration, may be added a kind of humble dignity, which did not disdain the meanest services to literature. The epic poet, the controvertist, the politician, having already descended to accommodate children with a book of rudiments, now, in the last years of his life, composed a book of Logick, for the initiation of students in philosophy: and published (1672) "*Artis Logicæ plenior Institutio ad Petri Rami*

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Ellwood*, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> This is doubtless a mistake or misprint for "Philips," who says (p. 379), of *Paradise Regained*, "it is generally censured to be much inferior to the other, tho' he could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him."

methodum concinnata;" that is, "A new Scheme of Logic, according to the Method of Ramus."<sup>1</sup> I know not whether, even in this book, he did not intend an act of hostility against the Universities; for Ramus<sup>2</sup> was one of the first oppugners of the old philosophy, who disturbed with innovations the quiet of the schools.

His polemical disposition again revived. He had now been safe so long, that he forgot his fears, and published a "Treatise of true Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the best Means to prevent the Growth of Popery."<sup>3</sup>

But this little tract is modestly written, with respectful mention of the Church of England, and an appeal to the thirty-nine articles. His principle of toleration is, agreement in the sufficiency of the Scriptures; and he extends it to all who, whatever their opinions are, profess to derive them from the sacred books. The papists appeal to other testimonies, and are therefore in his opinion not to be permitted the liberty of either publick or private worship; for though they plead conscience, *we have no warrant, he says, to regard conscience which is not grounded in Scripture.*

Those who are not convinced by his reasons, may be perhaps delighted with his wit. The term *Roman catholic*

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Masson is of opinion that this work, like the *Accidence*, was an old MS. written most probably in Milton's Cambridge days. He observes that "the Ramish Logic adopted with such zeal by the Protestant Universities of Europe in the last half of the sixteenth century in opposition to the Aristotelian, with which the cause of Roman Catholicism was thought to be identified, had been taught in Cambridge before Milton was a student there," and that the controversy probably raged fiercely in the colleges during his time of residence. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 264, and vol. vi. p. 685.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Ramus (1515-1572), an educational reformer, born in Picardy.

<sup>3</sup> A small quarto tract of sixteen pages, the appearance of which, in 1673, with no printer's or publisher's name, suggests that the publication was by Milton himself, in evasion of the press law.



is, he says, *one of the Pope's bulls ; it is particular universal, or catholick schismatick.*

He has, however, something better. As the best preservative against Popery, he recommends the diligent perusal of the Scriptures; a duty, from which he warns the busy part of mankind not to think themselves excused.

He now reprinted his juvenile poems,<sup>1</sup> with some additions.

In the last year of his life he sent to the press,<sup>2</sup> seeming to take delight in publication, a collection of Familiar Epistles in Latin; to which, being too few to make a volume, he added some academical exercises,<sup>3</sup> which perhaps he perused with pleasure, as they recalled to his memory the days of youth; but for which nothing but veneration for his name could now procure a reader.

When he had attained his sixty-sixth year, the gout, with which he had been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature. He died<sup>4</sup> by a quiet and silent expiration, about the tenth of November 1674, at his house in Bunhill-fields; and was buried next his father<sup>5</sup> in the chancel of St. Giles at Cripplegate. His funeral was very splendidly and numerously attended.

<sup>1</sup> *Poems,* &c. "upon several occasions. By Mr. John Milton: Both English and Latin. Composed at several times. With a small *Tractate of Education* to Mr. Hartlib, 1673." Small 8vo. pp. 290.

<sup>2</sup> In July, 1674. It had been Milton's intention to include his *State Letters*, but this had to be relinquished for political reasons. The volume contained thirty-one letters addressed to seventeen correspondents, a few of whom were still alive. *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 724.

<sup>3</sup> *Prolesiones Oratoricæ*, or Rhetorical Essays, written at Cambridge. These have been partially translated, and for the first time, thoroughly examined by Prof. Masson, who shows their great Autobiographical value and interest as illustrating Milton's University career. *M. M.* vol. i. pp. 272-306.

<sup>4</sup> November 8th, 1674, aged sixty-five years and eleven months.

<sup>5</sup> Buried March 15th, 1646-7. On Milton's relations with him, see Masson's translation of the Poem *Ad Patrem*. *M. M.* vol. i. p. 334.

Upon his grave there is supposed to have been no memorial; but in our time a monument has been erected in Westminster-Abbey *To the Author of Paradise Lost*, by Mr. Benson,<sup>1</sup> who has in the inscription bestowed more words upon himself than upon Milton.

When the inscription for the monument of Philips,<sup>2</sup> in which he was said to be *solus Miltono secundus*, was exhibited to Dr. Sprat, then dean of Westminster, he refused to admit it; the name of Milton was, in his opinion, too detestable to be read on the wall of a building dedicated to devotion. Atterbury,<sup>3</sup> who succeeded him, being author of the inscription, permitted its reception. "And such has been the change of publick opinion," said Dr. Gregory,<sup>4</sup> from whom I heard this account, "that I have seen erected in the church a statue of that man, whose name I once knew considered as a pollution of its walls."

Milton has the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful, so as to have been called the Lady of his college. His hair, which was of a light brown, parted at the foretop, and hung down upon his shoulders, according to the picture which he has given of Adam.<sup>5</sup> He was, however, not of the heroick stature, but rather below the middle size, according to Mr. Richardson, who mentions

<sup>1</sup> In 1737. He was Surveyor of Buildings to George I.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid. infr. Life, John Philips.*

<sup>3</sup> Francis Atterbury, D.D. (1661-62—1731-32), Dean of Westminster, and afterwards Bishop of Rochester, was a great champion of the rights of the Clergy in Convocation, the friend of Pope and Swift, and a zealous and eloquent divine. He was banished on suspicion of being concerned in a Plot in favour of the Pretender, and died in Paris.

<sup>4</sup> This was, no doubt, David Gregory, D.D. (1696-1767), who, when Johnson went up to Oxford, in 1728, was Professor of Modern History and Languages, George I. having founded that Chair in 1723. When Johnson visited Oxford in 1739, Gregory had then been for three years Dean of Christchurch.

<sup>5</sup> *Pier. Lost Ald. M.* vol. iv. p. 301-3.

him as having narrowly escaped from being *short and thick*.<sup>1</sup> He was vigorous and active, and delighted in the exercise of the sword, in which he is related to have been eminently skilful. His weapon was, I believe, not the rapier, but the backsword, of which he recommends the use in his book on Education.

His eyes are said never to have been bright; but, if he was a dexterous fencer, they must have been once quick.

His domestick habits, so far as they are known, were those of a severe student. He drank little strong drink of any kind, and fed without excess in quantity, and in his earlier years without delicacy of choice. In his youth he studied late at night; but afterwards changed his hours, and rested in bed from nine to four in the summer, and five in winter. The course of his day was best known after he was blind. When he first rose, he heard a chapter in the Hebrew Bible, and then studied till twelve; then took some exercise for an hour; then dined; then played on the organ, and sung, or heard another sing; then studied to six; then entertained his visiters till eight; then supped, and, after a pipe of tobacco and a glass of water, went to bed.

So is his life described; but this even tenour appears attainable only in Colleges. He that lives in the world will sometimes have the succession of his practice broken and confused. Visiters, of whom Milton is represented to have had great numbers, will come and stay unseasonably; business, of which every man has some, must be done when others will do it.

When he did not care to rise early, he had something read to him by his bedside; perhaps at this time his daughters were employed. He composed much in the

<sup>1</sup> *Exp. Notes*, p. ii.



morning, and dictated in the day, sitting obliquely in an elbow-chair, with his leg thrown over the arm.

Fortune appears not to have had much of his care. In the civil wars he lent his personal estate to the parliament; but when, after the contest was decided, he solicited repayment, he met not only with neglect, but *sharp rebuke*; and, having tired both himself and his friends, was given up to poverty and hopeless indignation, till he shewed how able he was to do greater service. He was then made Latin secretary, with two hundred pounds a year; and had a thousand pounds<sup>1</sup> for his "Defence of the People." His widow, who, after his death, retired to Nantwich in Cheshire, and died about 1729,<sup>2</sup> is said to have reported that he lost two thousand pounds by entrusting it to a scrivener; and that, in the general depredation upon the Church, he had grasped an estate of about sixty pounds a year belonging to Westminster-Abbey, which, like other sharers of the plunder of rebellion, he was afterwards obliged to return. Two thousand pounds, which he had placed in the Excise-office, were also lost. There is yet no reason to believe that he was ever reduced to indigence. His wants, being few, were competently supplied. He sold his library before his death, and left his family fifteen hundred pounds, on which his widow laid hold, and only gave one hundred to each of his daughters.<sup>3</sup>

His literature was unquestionably great. He read all

<sup>1</sup> For confutation of this statement, see *M. M.* vol. iv. p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> Her Will was dated August 22, 1727, and proved on the 10th October, 1727. She therefore died at the age of eighty-nine, having out-lived her husband fifty-three years. Her goods and chattels were sworn under £40, and the "true and perfect" inventory of them is a touching document. *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 747.

<sup>3</sup> Milton's Nuncupative Will was not found till after Johnson's death. *M. M.* vol. vi. p. 736. This document furnishes (Appendix D) a truer estimate of the wife's character than that given in the text. See also *M. M.* vol. vi. pp. 727-728.



the languages which are considered either as learned or polite; Hebrew, with its two dialects, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish. In Latin his skill was such as places him in the first rank of writers and critics; and he appears to have cultivated Italian with uncommon diligence. The books in which his daughter, who used to read to him, represented him as most delighting, after Homer, which he could almost repeat, were Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and "Euripides." His "Euripides" is, by Mr. Cradock's kindness,<sup>1</sup> now in my hands: the margin is sometimes noted; but I have found nothing remarkable.

Of the English poets he set most value upon Spenser,<sup>2</sup> Shakspeare, and Cowley. Spenser was apparently his favourite: Shakspeare he may easily be supposed to like, with every other skilful reader; but I should not have expected that Cowley, whose ideas of excellence were different from his own, would have had much of his approbation. His character of Dryden, who sometimes visited him, was, that he was a good rhymist, but no poet.

His theological opinions<sup>3</sup> are said to have been first Calvinistical; and afterwards, perhaps when he began to hate the Presbyterians, to have extended towards Arminianism. In the mixed questions of theology and government, he never thinks that he can recede far enough from popery, or prelacy; but what Baudius<sup>4</sup> says of Eras-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cradock bequeathed this volume to Sir Henry Halford. On this and other of Milton's books, see Ald. *M.* vol. i. p. xciv.

<sup>2</sup> See references given by Prof. Hales, ed. *Areopagitica*, pp. 18, 96.

<sup>3</sup> A very important and very curious *Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, or *Systematic Body of Divinity*, was delivered by Milton, with a transcript of his *State Letters*, for publication, to the young scholar Daniel Skinner, B.A. of Trinity College, Cambridge, and his amanuensis. For the remarkable history of the discovery in 1823, and publication and contents of this treatise, see *M. M.* vol. vi. pp. 790-840.

<sup>4</sup> Dominic Baudius (1561-1613), Professor of History in the University of Leyden. His Latin Poems are considered elegant and harmonious,

mus seems applicable to him, *magis habuit quod fugeret, quam quod sequeretur*. He had determined rather what to condemn, than what to approve. He has not associated himself with any denomination of Protestants: we know rather what he was not, than what he was. He was not of the church of Rome; he was not of the church of England.

To be of no church, is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant, and which is animated only by Faith and Hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unless it be invigorated and reimpresed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had full conviction of the truth of Christianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundest veneration, to have been untainted by an heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occasional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any visible worship. In the distribution of his hours, there was no hour of prayer, either solitary, or with his household; omitting publick prayers, he omitted all.

Of this omission the reason has been sought, upon a supposition which ought never to be made, that men live with their own approbation, and justify their conduct to themselves. Prayer certainly was not thought superfluous by him, who represents our first parents as praying acceptably in the state of innocence, and efficaciously after their fall. That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed; his studies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which he condemned himself, and which he in-

but wanting in vigour and originality. His well-known *Epistolæ* are most entertaining. This saying of his is quoted by Jortin in his *Life of Erasmus*, vol. ii. p. 7, ed. 1760.

tended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation.

His political notions were those of an acrimonious and surly republican, for which it is not known that he gave any better reason than that *a popular government was the most frugal; for the trappings of a monarchy would set up an ordinary commonwealth.*<sup>1</sup> It is surely very shallow policy, that supposes money to be the chief good; and even this, without considering that the support and expence of a Court is, for the most part, only a particular kind of traffick, by which money is circulated, without any national impoverishment.

Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatness, and a sullen desire of independence; in petulance impatient of controul, and pride disdainful of superiority. He hated monarchs in the state, and prelates in the church; for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be suspected, that his predominant desire was to destroy rather than establish, and that he felt not so much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.

It has been observed, that they who most loudly clamour for liberty do not most liberally grant it. What we know of Milton's character, in domestick relations, is, that he was severe and arbitrary. His family consisted of women; and there appears in his books something like a Turkish contempt of females, as subordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education. He thought woman made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion.

Of his family some account may be expected. His sister, first married to Mr. Philips, afterwards married Mr. Agar,

<sup>1</sup> Toland, *Life of Milton*, p. 139.

a friend of her first husband, who succeeded him in the Crown-office.<sup>1</sup> She had by her first husband Edward and John, the two nephews whom Milton educated; and by her second, two daughters.

His brother, Sir Christopher, had two daughters, Mary and Catherine, and a son Thomas, who succeeded Agar in the Crown-office, and left a daughter living in 1749 in Grosvenor-street.

Milton had children only by his first wife; Anne, Mary, and Deborah. Anne, though deformed, married a master-builder, and died of her first child. Mary died single. Deborah married Abraham Clark, a weaver in Spitalfields, and lived seventy-six years, to August, 1727. This is the daughter of whom public mention has been made. She could repeat the first lines of Homer, the "Metamorphoses," and some of "Euripides," by having often read them. Yet here incredulity is ready to make a stand. Many repetitions are necessary to fix in the memory lines not understood; and why should Milton wish or want to hear them so often! These lines were at the beginning of the poems. Of a book written in a language not understood, the beginning raises no more attention than the end; and as those that understand it know commonly the beginning best, its rehearsal will seldom be necessary. It is not likely that Milton required any passage to be so much repeated as that his daughter could learn it; nor likely that he desired the initial lines to be read at all: nor that the daughter, weary of the drudgery of pronouncing unideal sounds, would voluntarily commit them to memory.

To this gentlewoman Addison made a present, and promised some establishment; but died soon after. Queen Caroline<sup>2</sup> sent her fifty guineas. She had seven sons and three daughters; but none of them had any children.

<sup>1</sup> In the Court of Chancery.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of George II.



except her son Caleb and her daughter Elizabeth. Caleb went to Fort St. George in the East Indies, and had two sons, of whom nothing is now known. Elizabeth married Thomas Foster, a weaver in Spitalfields, and had seven children, who all died. She kept a petty grocer's or chandler's shop, first at Holloway, and afterwards in Cock-lane near Shoreditch Church. She knew little of her grandfather, and that little was not good. She told of his harshness to his daughters, and his refusal to have them taught to write; and, in opposition to other accounts, represented him as delicate, though temperate, in his diet.

In 1750, April 5, "Comus" was played<sup>1</sup> for her benefit. She had so little acquaintance with diversion or gaiety, that she did not know what was intended when a benefit was offered her. The profits of the night were only one hundred and thirty pounds, though Dr. Newton<sup>2</sup> brought a large contribution; and twenty pounds were given by Tonson,<sup>3</sup> a man who is to be praised as often as he is named. Of this sum one hundred pounds was placed in the stocks, after some debate between her and her husband in whose name it should be entered; and the rest augmented their little stock, with which they removed to Islington.<sup>4</sup> This was the greatest benefaction that "Paradise Lost" ever procured the author's descendents; and

<sup>1</sup> Before the performance, Johnson published a letter in the *General Advertiser*, calling attention to its object. Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. i. p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop of Bristol, who in 1749 published an edition of Milton's Works. Boswell quotes, from Newton's *Account of his own Life* (1782), some very severe strictures on the *Lives of the Poets*, which Johnson declared "he durst not have printed while he was alive." Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> This was not the great Jacob, who died 18th March, 1735-36, aged eighty, nor Jacob, his nephew and partner, who died before him, Nov. 25th, 1735, but Jacob, old Jacob's great nephew, who died 31st March, 1767. P. Cunningham, *Lives of the Poets*, vol. i. p. 138.

<sup>4</sup> Here she died May 9th, 1754.

in this is what has now succeeded to finish his life, had the honour of contributing a Fragment.

In the examination of William's poetical works, I shall pay no more regard to time as it begins with his juvenile productions. For his early pieces he seems to have had a degree of fondness not very unusual: what he has once written he seems to preserve and gives to the public an unfinished poem which he broke off because he was *nothing satisfied with what he had done*, supposing his readers less wise than himself. These preludes to his future labours are in Italian, Latin, and English. Of the Italian I cannot pretend to speak as a critic; but I have heard them commended by a man well qualified to decide their merit. The Latin pieces are lusciously elegant; but the delight which they afford is rather by the exquisite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction, and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention, or vigour of sentiment. They are not all of equal value; the elegies excell the odes; and some of the exercises on Gunpowder Treason might have been spared.

The English poems, though they make no promises of "Paradise Lost," have this evidence of genius, that they have a cast original and unborrowed. But their peculiarity is not excellence: if they differ from verses of others, they differ for the worse; for they are too often distinguished by repulsive harshness; the combinations of words are new, but they are not pleasing; the rhymes and epithets seem to be laboriously sought, and violently applied.

That in the early parts of his life he wrote with much care appears from his manuscripts, happily preserved at

<sup>1</sup> The Pandion. Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cunningham suggests Baretti, Johnson's Italian friend. See Howwell's Johnson, vol. i. pp. 237, 286 n.

Cambridge, in which many of his smaller works are found as they were first written, with the subsequent corrections. Such reliques shew how excellence is required; what we hope ever to do with ease, we may learn first to do with diligence.

Those who admire the beauties of this great poet, sometimes force their own judgment into false approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of suavity and softness; he was a *Lion* that had no skill in *dandling the Kid*.

One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed is "*Lycidas*;"<sup>1</sup> of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers displeasing. What beauty there is, we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon *Arethuse* and *Mincius*, nor tells of rough *satyrs* and *fauns with cloven heel*. Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting: whatever images it can supply, are long ago exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey<sup>2</sup> that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must

<sup>1</sup> Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 123. For a charming criticism of *Lycidas*, "the touchstone of taste," see Mark Pattison on Milton in Ward's *English Poets*, vol. ii. p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> On the death of Mr. William Hervey. Cowley's Poems, p. 13.

miss the companion of his labours, and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines!

We drove a field, and both together heard  
What time the grey fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote, that it is never sought because it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers, appear the heathen deities; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a College easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; and how one god asks another god what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honour.

✓ This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverend combinations. The shepherd likewise is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a superintendent of a Christian flock. Such equivocations are always unskilful; but here they are indecent, and at least approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious.

[ Such is the power of reputation justly acquired, that it's blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read "Lycidas" with pleasure, had he not known its author.



Of the two pieces, "L'Allegro"<sup>1</sup> and "Il Penseroso,"<sup>2</sup> I believe opinion is uniform; every man that reads them, reads them with pleasure. The author's design is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to shew how objects derive their colours from the mind, by representing the operation of the same things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the same man as he is differently disposed; but rather how, among the successive variety of appearances, every disposition of mind takes hold on those by which it may be gratified.

The *cheerful* man hears the lark in the morning; the *pensive* man hears the nightingale in the evening. The *cheerful* man sees the cock strut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks *not unseen* to observe the glory of the rising sun, or listen to the singing milk-maid, and view the labours of the plowman and the mower; then casts his eyes about him over scenes of smiling plenty, and looks up to the distant tower, the residence of some fair inhabitant; thus he pursues rural gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himself at night with the fanciful narratives of superstitious ignorance.

The *pensive* man, at one time, walks *unseen* to muse at midnight; and at another hears the sullen curfew. If the weather drives him home, he sits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers*; or by a lonely lamp outwatches the North Star, to discover the habitation of separate souls, and varies the shades of meditation, by contemplating the magnificent or pathetick scenes of tragick and epic poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackless woods, falls asleep by some murmuring water, and with melancholy enthusiasm expects some dream of prognostication, or some musick played by aerial performers.

<sup>1</sup> Ald. *M.* vol. iii. p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 134.

Both Mirth and Melancholy are solitary, silent inhabitants of the breast that neither receive nor transmit communication; no mention is therefore made of a philosophical friend, or a pleasant companion. The seriousness does not arise from any participation of calamity, nor the gaiety from the pleasures of the bottle.

The man of *chearfulness*, having exhausted the country, tries what *towered cities*<sup>1</sup> will afford, and mingles with scenes of splendor, gay assemblies, and nuptial festivities; but he mingles a mere spectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonson, or the wild dramas of Shakspeare, are exhibited, he attends the theatre.

The *pensive*<sup>2</sup> man never loses himself in crowds, but walks the cloister, or frequents the cathedral. Milton probably had not yet forsaken the Church.

Both his characters delight in musick; but he seems to think that chearful notes would have obtained from Pluto a compleat dismissal of Eurydice, of whom solemn sounds only procured a conditional release.<sup>3</sup>

For the old age of *Chearfulness* he makes no provision; but *Melancholy* he conducts with great dignity to the close of life. His *Chearfulness* is without levity, and his *Pensiveness* without asperity.

Through these two poems the images are properly selected, and nicely distinguished; but the colours of the diction seem not sufficiently discriminated. I know not whether the characters are kept sufficiently apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination.

The greatest of his juvenile performances is the "Mask

<sup>1</sup> *L'Allegro*, Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Il Penseroso*, *ibid.* p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> *L'Allegro*, *ibid.* p. 147. *Il Penseroso*, *ibid.* p. 138.

of Comus ;”<sup>1</sup> in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of “Paradise Lost.” Milton appears to have formed very early that system of diction, and mode of verse, which his maturer judgement approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor desired to deviate.

Nor does “Comus” afford only a specimen of his language ; it exhibits likewise his power of description and his vigour of sentiment, employed in the praise and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found ; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets, embellish almost every period with lavish decoration. As a series of lines, therefore, it may be considered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it.

As a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable. A Masque, in those parts where supernatural intervention is admitted, must indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination ; but, so far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reasonable, which can hardly be said of the conduct of the two brothers ; who, when their sister sinks with fatigue in a pathless wilderness, wander both away together in search of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpless Lady to all the sadness and danger of solitude. This however is a defect overbalanced by its convenience.

What deserves more reprehension is, that the prologue spoken in the wild wood by the attendant Spirit is addressed to the audience ; a mode of communication so contrary to nature of dramattick representation, that no precedents can support it.

The discourse of the Spirit is too long ;<sup>2</sup> an objection that may be made to almost all the following speeches : they have not the spriteliness of a dialogue animated by reciprocal contention, but seem rather declamations deliberately composed, and formally repeated, on a moral question.

<sup>1</sup> Ald. *M.* vol. iii. p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 99.



The auditor therefore listens as to a lecture, without passion, without anxiety.

The song of Comus<sup>1</sup> has airiness and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's morals as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleasure are so general, that they excite no distinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy.

The following soliloquies of Comus and the Lady are elegant, but tedious. The song must owe much to the voice, if it ever can delight. At last the Brothers enter, with too much tranquillity; and when they have feared lest their sister should be in danger, and hoped that she is not in danger, the Elder makes a speech in praise of chastity, and the Younger finds how fine it is to be a philosopher.

Then descends the Spirit in form of a shepherd; and the Brother, instead of being in haste to ask his help, praises his singing, and enquires his business in that place. It is remarkable, that at this interview the Brother is taken with a short fit of rhyming. The Spirit relates<sup>2</sup> that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moralises again; and the Spirit makes a long narration, of no use because it is false, and therefore unsuitable to a good Being.

In all these parts the language is poetical, and the sentiments are generous; but there is something wanting to allure attention.

The dispute between the Lady and Comus<sup>3</sup> is the most animated and affecting scene of the drama, and wants nothing but a brisker reciprocation of objections and replies, to invite attention, and detain it.

The songs are vigorous, and full of imagery; but they are harsh in their diction, and not very musical in their numbers.

<sup>1</sup> Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 81.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 99-102.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 103-113.



Throughout the whole, the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant for dialogue. It is a drama in the epic style, inelegantly splendid, and tediously instructive.

The "Sonnets" were written in different parts of Milton's life, upon different occasions. They deserve not any particular criticism; for of the best it can only be said, that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth<sup>1</sup> and the twenty-first<sup>2</sup> are truly entitled to this slender commendation. The fabrick of a sonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has ever succeeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed.

Those little pieces may be dispatched without much anxiety; a greater work calls for greater care. I am now to examine "*Paradise Lost*;"<sup>3</sup> a poem, which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance the second, among the productions of the human mind.

By the general consent of criticks, the first praise of genius is due to the writer of an epick poem, as it requires an assemblage of all the powers which are singly sufficient for other compositions. Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason. Epick poetry undertakes to teach the most important truths by the most pleasing precepts, and therefore relates some great event in the most affecting manner. History must supply the writer with the rudiments of narration, which he must improve and exalt by a nobler art, must animate by dramatick energy, and diversify by retrospection and anticipation; morality must teach him the exact bounds, and different shades, of vice and virtue;

<sup>1</sup> Son. VIII. *When the Assault was intended to the City.* Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Son. XXI. *To Cyriac Skinner.* Ibid. p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. vol. i. p. i.

from policy, and the practice of life, he has to learn the discriminations of character, and the tendency of the passions, either single or combined; and physiology must supply him with illustrations and images. To put these materials to poetical use, is required an imagination capable of painting nature, and realizing fiction. Nor is he yet a poet till he has attained the whole extension of his language, distinguished all the delicacies of phrase, and all the colours of words, and learned to adjust their different sounds to all the varieties of metrical moderation.

Bossu<sup>1</sup> is of opinion that the poet's first work is to find a *moral*, which his fable is afterwards to illustrate and establish. This seems to have been the process only of Milton; the moral of other poems is incidental and consequent; in Milton's only it is essential and intrinsic. His purpose was the most useful and the most arduous; *to vindicate the ways of God to man*; to shew the reasonableness of religion, and the necessity of obedience to the Divine Law.

To convey this moral, there must be a *fable*, a narration artfully constructed, so as to excite curiosity, and surprise expectation. In this part of his work, Milton must be confessed to have equalled every other poet. He has involved in his account of the Fall of Man the events which preceded, and those that were to follow it: he has interwoven the whole system of theology with such propriety, that every part appears to be necessary; and scarcely any recital is wished shorter for the sake of quickening the progress of the main action.

The subject of an epic poem is naturally an event of great importance. That of Milton is not the destruction of a city, the conduct of a colony, or the foundation of an empire. His subject is the fate of worlds, the revolutions

<sup>1</sup> A French critic of the seventeenth century, whose dissertation on the laws of epic poetry was famous in its day, and was translated into English.—M. ARNOLD.

of heaven and of earth; rebellion against the Supreme King, raised by the highest order of created beings; the overthrow of their host, and the punishment of their crime; the creation of a new race of reasonable creatures; their original happiness and innocence, their forfeiture of immortality, and their restoration to hope and peace.

Great events can be hastened or retarded only by persons of elevated dignity. Before the greatness displayed in Milton's poem, all other greatness shrinks away. The weakest of his agents are the highest and noblest of human beings, the original parents of mankind; with whose actions the elements consented; on whose rectitude, or deviation of will, depended the state of terrestrial nature, and the condition of all the future inhabitants of the globe.

Of the other agents in the poem, the chief are such as it is irreverence to name on slight occasions. The rest were lower powers;

“—of which the least could wield  
Those elements, and arm him with the force  
Of all their regions;”<sup>1</sup>

powers, which only the controul of Omnipotence restrains from laying creation waste, and filling the vast expanse of space with ruin and confusion. To display the motives and actions of beings thus superiour, so far as human reason can examine them, or human imagination represent them, is the task which this mighty poet has undertaken and performed.

In the examination of epick poems much speculation is commonly employed upon the *characters*. The characters in the “*Paradise Lost*,” which admit of examination, are those of angels and of man; of angels good and evil; of man in his innocent and sinful state.

Among the angels, the virtue of Raphael is mild and placid, of easy condescension and free communication; that of Michael is regal and lofty, and, as may seem, atten-

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*. Ald. M. vol. ii. p. 46.



tive to the dignity of his own nature. Abdiel and Gabriel appear occasionally, and act as every incident requires; the solitary fidelity of Abdiel is very amiably painted.

Of the evil angels the characters are more diversified. To Satan, as Addison observes,<sup>1</sup> such sentiments are given as suit *the most exalted and most depraved being*. Milton has been censured, by Clarke,<sup>2</sup> for the impiety which sometimes breaks from Satan's mouth. For there are thoughts, as he justly remarks, which no observation of character can justify, because no good man would willingly permit them to pass, however transiently, through his own mind. To make Satan speak as a rebel, without any such expressions as might taint the reader's imagination, was indeed one of the great difficulties in Milton's undertaking, and I cannot but think that he has extricated himself with great happiness. There is in Satan's speeches little that can give pain to a pious ear. The language of rebellion cannot be the same with that of obedience. The malignity of Satan foams in haughtiness and obstinacy; but his expressions are commonly general, and no otherwise offensive than as they are wicked.<sup>3</sup>

The other chiefs of the celestial rebellion are very judiciously discriminated in the first and second books; and the ferocious character of Moloch appears, both in the battle and the council, with exact consistency.

To Adam and to Eve are given, during their innocence, such sentiments as innocence can generate and utter. Their love is pure benevolence and mutual veneration;

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, No. 303, seventh paper.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on Study*.—JOHNSON. "Wherein Directions are given for the Due Conduct thereof, and the Collection of a Library proper for the Purpose, consisting of the choicest Books in all the several parts of Learning, by John Clarke, Master of the Public Grammar School in Hull." London, 1731, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> Coleridge has a fine passage on the character of Satan. *Coleridge's Remains*, vol. i. p. 176.



their repasts are without luxury, and their diligence without toil. Their addresses to their Maker have little more than the voice of admiration and gratitude. Fruition left them nothing to ask, and Innocence left them nothing to fear.

But with guilt enter distrust and discord, mutual accusation, and stubborn self-defence; they regard each other with alienated minds, and dread their Creator as the avenger of their transgression. At last they seek shelter in his mercy, soften to repentance, and melt in supplication. Both before and after the Fall, the superiority of Adam is diligently sustained.

Of the *probable* and the *marvellous*, two parts of a vulgar epic poem, which immerse the critick in deep consideration, the "Paradise Lost" requires little to be said. It contains the history of a miracle, of Creation and Redemption; it displays the power and the mercy of the Supreme Being; the probable therefore is marvellous, and the marvellous is probable. The substance of the narrative is truth; and as truth allows no choice, it is, like necessity, superior to rule. To the accidental or adventitious parts, as to every thing human, some slight exceptions may be made. But the main fabrick is immovably supported.

It is justly remarked by Addison,<sup>1</sup> that this poem has, by the nature of its subject, the advantage above all others, that it is universally and perpetually interesting. All mankind will, through all ages, bear the same relation to Adam and to Eve, and must partake of that good and evil which extend to themselves.

Of the *machinery*, so called from *Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς*, by which is meant the occasional interposition of super-

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, No. 273, second paper. Hallam has some fine remarks on the vast improvement of the highest criticism, the philosophy of æsthetics, since the days of Addison. See *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 464 n.

natural power, another fertile topic of critical remarks, here is no room to speak, because every thing is done under the immediate and visible direction of Heaven; but the rule is so far observed, that no part of the action could have been accomplished by any other means.

Of *episodes*, I think there are only two, contained in Raphael's relation of the war in heaven, and Michael's prophetick account of the changes to happen in this world. Both are closely connected with the great action; one was necessary to Adam as a warning, the other as a consolation.

To the compleatness or *integrity* of the design nothing can be objected; it has distinctly and clearly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is perhaps no poem, of the same length, from which so little can be taken without apparent mutilation. Here are no funeral games, nor is there any long description of a shield. The short digressions at the beginning of the third, seventh, and ninth books, might doubtless be spared; but superfluities so beautiful, who would take away? or who does not wish that the author of the "Iliad" had gratified succeeding ages with a little knowledge of himself? Perhaps no passages are more frequently or more attentively read than those extrinsick paragraphs; and, since the end of poetry is pleasure, that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleased.

The questions, whether the action of the poem be strictly *one*, whether the poem can be properly termed *heroick*, and who is the hero, are raised by such readers as draw their principles of judgement rather from books than from reason. Milton, though he intituled "Paradise Lost" only a *poem*, yet calls it himself *heroick song*. Dryden, petulantly and indecently, denies the heroism of Adam, because he was overcome; but there is no reason why the hero should not be unfortunate, except established

practice, since success and virtue do not go necessarily together. Cato is the hero of Lucan; but Lucan's authority will not be suffered by Quintilian to decide. However, if success be necessary, Adam's deceiver was at last crushed; Adam was restored to his Maker's favour, and therefore may securely resume his human rank.<sup>1</sup>

After the scheme and fabrick of the poem, must be considered its component parts, the sentiments and the diction.

The *sentiments*, as expressive of manners, or appropriated to characters, are, for the greater part, unexceptionably just.

Splendid passages, containing lessons of morality, or precepts of prudence, occur seldom. Such is the original formation of this poem, that as it admits no human manners till the Fall, it can give little assistance to human conduct. Its end is to raise the thoughts above sublunary cares or pleasures. Yet the praise of that fortitude, with which Abdiel maintained his singularity of virtue against the scorn of multitudes, may be accommodated to all times; and Raphael's reproof of Adam's curiosity after the planetary motions, with the answer returned by Adam, may be confidently opposed to any rule of life which any poet has delivered.

The thoughts which are occasionally called forth in the progress, are such as could only be produced by an imagination in the highest degree fervid and active, to which materials were supplied by incessant study and unlimited curiosity. The heat of Milton's mind might be said to sublimate his learning, to throw off into his work the spirit of science, unmingled with its grosser parts.

<sup>1</sup> See Dryden in his *Essay on Satire*, S. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 18 n, and Addison in his first paper on *Paradise Lost*. *Spectator*, No. 267. Dryden observed that the Devil, not Adam, was the hero. Pref. to *Virgil*, vol. xiv. p. 143.



He had considered creation in its whole extent, and his descriptions are therefore learned. He had accustomed his imagination to unrestrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore were extensive. The characteristic quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace; but his natural port is gigantick loftiness.<sup>1</sup> He can please when pleasure is required; but it is his peculiar power to astonish.

He seems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others; the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful: he therefore chose a subject on which too much could not be said, on which he might tire his fancy without the censure of extravagance.

The appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, did not satiate his appetite of greatness. To paint things as they are, requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy.<sup>2</sup> Milton's delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery, into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the counsels of hell, or accompany the choirs of heaven.

But he could not be always in other worlds: he must sometimes revisit earth, and tell of things visible and

<sup>1</sup> Algarotti terms it *gigantesca sublimità Miltoniana*.—JOHNSON.

<sup>2</sup> Coleridge calls Milton "not a picturesque, but a musical poet" (*Remains*, vol. i. p. 177), and Hallam ascribes this characteristic chiefly to his blindness. Milton "describes visible things . . . but he feels music." *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 469.



known. When he cannot raise wonder by the sublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility.

Whatever be his subject, he never fails to fill the imagination. But his images and descriptions of the scenes or operations of Nature do not seem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freshness, raciness, and energy of immediate observation. He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it, *through the spectacles of books*; <sup>1</sup> and on most occasions calls learning to his assistance. The garden of Eden brings to his mind the vale of "Enna," where Proserpine was gathering flowers.<sup>2</sup> Satan makes his way through fighting elements, like *Argo* between the *Cyanean* rocks, or *Ulysses* between the two *Sicilian* whirlpools,<sup>3</sup> when he shunned *Charybdis* on the *larboard*. The mythological allusions have been justly censured, as not being always used with notice of their vanity; but they contribute variety to the narration, and produce an alternate exercise of the memory and the fancy.

His similies are less numerous, and more various, than those of his predecessors.<sup>4</sup> But he does not confine himself within the limits of rigorous comparison: his great excellence is amplitude, and he expands the adventitious image beyond the dimensions which the occasion required. Thus, comparing the shield of Satan to the orb of the Moon, he crowds the imagination with the discovery of the telescope, and all the wonders which the telescope discovers.<sup>5</sup>

Of his moral sentiments it is hardly praise to affirm that they excel those of all other poets; for this superiority he was indebted to his acquaintance with the sacred writings.

<sup>1</sup> Dryden, *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Paradise Lost*, book iv. line 268. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> *Paradise Lost*, book ii. line 1,017. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> See Addison's seventh paper. *Spectator*, No. 303.

<sup>5</sup> *Paradise Lost*, book i. line 284. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 13.

The ancient epick poets, wanting the light of Revelation, were very unskilful teachers of virtue: their principal characters may be great, but they are not amiable. The reader may rise from their works with a greater degree of active or passive fortitude, and sometimes of prudence; but he will be able to carry away few precepts of justice, and none of mercy.

From the Italian writers it appears, that the advantages of even Christian knowledge may be supposed in vain. Ariosto's pravity is generally known; and though the "Deliverance of Jerusalem" may be considered as a sacred subject, the poet has been very sparing of moral instruction.

In Milton every line breathes sanctity of thought, and purity of manners, except when the train of the narration requires the introduction of the rebellious spirits; and even they are compelled to acknowledge their subjection to God, in such a manner as excites reverence, and confirms piety.

Of human beings there are but two; but those two are the parents of mankind, venerable before their fall for dignity and innocence, and amiable after it for repentance and submission. In their first state their affection is tender without weakness, and their piety sublime without presumption. When they have sinned, they shew how discord begins in mutual frailty, and how it ought to cease in mutual forbearance; how confidence of the divine favour is forfeited by sin, and how hope of pardon may be obtained by penitence and prayer. A state of innocence we can only conceive, if indeed, in our present misery, it be possible to conceive it; but the sentiments and worship proper to a fallen and offending being, we have all to learn, as we have all to practise.

The poet, whatever be done, is always great. Our progenitors, in their first state, conversed with angels; even *when folly and sin had degraded them, they had not in*

their humiliation *the port of mean suitors*; <sup>1</sup> and they rise again to reverential regard, when we find that their prayers were heard.

As human passions did not enter the world before the Fall, there is in the "*Paradise Lost*" little opportunity for the pathetick; but what little there is has not been lost. That passion which is peculiar to rational nature, the anguish arising from the consciousness of transgression, and the horrors attending the sense of the Divine Displeasure, are very justly described and forcibly impressed. But the passions are moved only on one occasion; sublimity is the general and prevailing quality in this poem; sublimity variously modified, sometimes descriptive, sometimes argumentative.

The defects and faults of "*Paradise Lost*," for faults and defects every work of man must have, it is the business of impartial criticism to discover. As, in displaying the excellence of Milton, I have not made long quotations, because of selecting beauties there had been no end, I shall in the same general manner mention that which seems to deserve censure; for what Englishman can take delight in transcribing passages, which, if they lessen the reputation of Milton, diminish in some degree the honour of our country?

The generality of my scheme does not admit the frequent notice of verbal inaccuracies; which Bentley,<sup>2</sup> perhaps better skilled in grammar than in poetry, has often found, though he sometimes made them, and which he imputed to the obtrusions of a reviser whom the author's blindness obliged him to employ. A supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, as is said, he in private allowed it to be false.

The plan of "*Paradise Lost*" has this inconvenience, that

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, book xi. line 8. Ald. M. vol. ii. p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Richard Bentley published, in 1732, an edition of *Paradise Lost*, with notes.



[it comprises neither human actions nor human manners. The man and woman who act and suffer, are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know. The reader finds no transaction in which he can be engaged; beholds no condition in which he can by any effort of imagination place himself; he has, therefore, little natural curiosity or sympathy.

We all, indeed, feel the effects of Adam's disobedience; we all sin like Adam, and like him must all bewail our offences; we have restless and insidious enemies in the fallen angels, and in the blessed spirits we have guardians and friends; in the Redemption of mankind we hope to be included: in the description of heaven and hell we are surely interested, as we are all to reside hereafter either in the regions of horror or bliss.

But these truths are too important to be new; they have been taught to our infancy; they have mingled with our solitary thoughts and familiar conversation, and are habitually interwoven with the whole texture of life. Being therefore not new, they raise no unaccustomed emotion in the mind; what we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected, cannot surprise.

Of the ideas suggested by these awful scenes, from some we recede with reverence, except when stated hours require their association; and from others we shrink with horror, or admit them only as salutary inflictions, as counterpoises to our interests and passions. Such images rather obstruct the career of fancy than incite it.

Pleasure and terroure are indeed the genuine sources of poetry; but poetical pleasure must be such as human strength and fortitude may combat. The good and evil of Eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit; the mind sinks under them in passive helplessness, content with calm belief and humble adoration.

*Known* truths, however, may take a different appear-



ance, and be conveyed to the mind by a new train of intermediate images. This Milton has undertaken, and performed with pregnancy and vigour of mind peculiar to himself. Whoever considers the few radical positions which the Scriptures afforded him, will wonder by what energetick operation he expanded them to such extent, and ramified them to so much variety, restrained as he was by religious reverence from licentiousness of fiction.

Here is a full display of the united force of study and genius; of a great accumulation of materials, with judgment to digest, and fancy to combine them: Milton was able to select from nature, or from story, from ancient fable, or from modern science, whatever could illustrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by study, and exalted by imagination.

It has been therefore said, without an indecent hyperbole, by one of his encomiasts, that in reading "*Paradise Lost*," we read a book of universal knowledge.

But original deficiency cannot be supplied. The want of human interest is always felt. "*Paradise Lost*" is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harrassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master, and seek for companions.

Another inconvenience of Milton's design is, that it requires the description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not show angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. This, being necessary, was therefore defensible; and he should have secured the consistency of his system, by keeping immateriality out of sight, and

enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily perplexed his poetry with his philosophy. His infernal and celestial powers are sometimes pure spirit, and sometimes animated body. When Satan walks with his lance upon the *burning marle*,<sup>1</sup> he has a body; when, in his passage between hell and the new world, he is in danger of sinking in the vacuity, and is supported by a gust of rising vapours, he has a body; when he animates the toad, he seems to be mere spirit, that can penetrate matter at pleasure; when he *starts up in his own shape*,<sup>2</sup> he has at least a determined form; and when he is brought before Gabriel, he has *a spear and a shield*,<sup>3</sup> which he had the power of hiding in the toad, though the arms of the contending angels are evidently material.

The vulgar inhabitants of Pandæmonium, being *incorporeal spirits*, are *at large, though without number*,<sup>4</sup> in a limited space; yet in the battle, when they were overwhelmed by mountains, their armour hurt them, *crushed in upon their substance, now grown gross by sinning*.<sup>5</sup> This likewise happened to the uncorrupted angels, who were overthrown *the sooner for their arms, for unarmed they might easily as spirits have evaded by contradiction or remove*.<sup>6</sup> Even as spirits they are hardly spiritual; for *contraction and remove* are images of matter; but if they could have escaped without their armour, they might have escaped from it, and left only the empty cover to be battered. Uriel,<sup>7</sup> when he rides on a sun-beam,<sup>8</sup> is material; Satan is material when he is afraid of the prowess of Adam.

The confusion of spirit and matter which pervades the

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, book i. line 296. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Bk. iv. l. 819, vol. i. p. 146. <sup>3</sup> Bk. iv. l. 990, vol. i. p. 153.

<sup>4</sup> Bk. i. l. 789, vol. i. p. 35.

<sup>5</sup> Bk. vi. ll. 656-661, vol. ii. p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> Bk. vi. l. 595, vol. ii. p. 61.

<sup>7</sup> Bk. iv. l. 556, vol. i. p. 135.

<sup>8</sup> Addison remarks that this "is a prettiness that might have been admired in a little fanciful poet, but seems below the genius of Milton." *Spectator*, No. 321.

whole narration of the war of heaven fills it with incongruity; and the book, in which it is related,<sup>1</sup> is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increased.

After the operation of immaterial agents, which cannot be explained, may be considered that of allegorical persons, which have no real existence. To exalt causes into agents, to invest abstract ideas with form, and animate them with activity, has always been the right of poetry. But such airy beings are, for the most part, suffered only to do their natural office, and retire. Thus Fame tells a tale, and Victory hovers over a general, or perches on a standard; but Fame and Victory can do no more. To give them any real employment, or ascribe to them any material agency, is to make them allegorical no longer, but to shock the mind by ascribing effects to non-entity. In the "Prometheus" of Æschylus, we see *Violence* and *Strength*, and in the "Alcestis" of Euripides, we see *Death*, brought upon the stage, all as active persons of the drama; but no precedents can justify absurdity.

Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty.<sup>2</sup> Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portress of hell; but when they stop the journey of Satan, a journey described as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. That Sin and Death should have shewn the way to hell, might have been allowed; but they cannot facilitate the passage by building a bridge, because the difficulty of Satan's passage is described as real and sensible, and the bridge ought to

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, book vi. Mr. Firth observes that this book is criticised with unbroken praise by Addison in his twelfth paper, *Spectator*, No. 333, and that Voltaire condemns it as absurd. *Art Épopée, Dictionnaire Philosophique Works*, ed. 1819, vol. xxxv. p. 439. C. H. Firth, *Milton*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> See Addison, *Spectator*, No. 357.



be only figurative. The hell assigned to the rebellious spirits is described as not less local than the residence of man. It is placed in some distant part of space, separated from the regions of harmony and order by a chaotick waste and an unoccupied vacuity; but *Sin* and *Death* worked up a *mole of aggravated soil*,<sup>1</sup> cemented with *asphaltus*; a work too bulky for ideal architects.

This unskilful allegory appears to me one of the greatest faults of the poem; and to this there was no temptation, but the author's opinion of its beauty.

To the conduct of the narrative some objections may be made. Satan is with great expectation<sup>2</sup> brought before Gabriel in Paradise, and is suffered to go away unmolested.<sup>3</sup> The creation of man is represented as the consequence of the vacuity left in heaven by the expulsion of the rebels; yet Satan mentions it as a report *rife in heaven*<sup>4</sup> before his departure.

To find sentiments for the state of innocence, was very difficult; and something of anticipation perhaps is now and then discovered. Adam's discourse of dreams seems not to be the speculation of a new-created being.<sup>5</sup> I know not whether his answer to the angel's reproof for curiosity does not want something of propriety: it is the speech of a man acquainted with many other men. Some philosophical notions, especially when the philosophy is false, might have been better omitted. The angel, in a comparison, speaks of *timorous deer*, before deer were yet timorous, and before Adam could understand the comparison.

<sup>1</sup> Misprint for "aggregated." *Par. Lost*, bk. x. l. 293. Ald. M. vol. ii. p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> *Par. Lost*, bk. iv. ll. 865-1,015, vol. i. pp. 148-153.

<sup>3</sup> The interruption of the combat by the vision of the golden scales is a refinement upon Homer's thought in the 22nd Iliad, and Virgil's in the *Æneid*, see *Spectator*, No. 321.

<sup>4</sup> *Par. Lost*, bk. i. l. 650, vol. i. p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Bk. v. ll. 95-116, vol. ii. p. 6.



Dryden remarks,<sup>1</sup> that Milton has some flats among his elevations.<sup>2</sup> This is only to say, that all the parts are not equal. In every work, one part must be for the sake of others; a palace must have passages; a poem must have transitions. It is no more to be required that wit should always be blazing, than that the sun should always stand at noon. In a great work there is a vicissitude of luminous and opaque parts, as there is in the world a succession of day and night. Milton, when he has expatiated in the sky, may be allowed sometimes to revisit earth; for what author ever soared so high, or sustained his flight so long?

Milton, being well versed in the Italian poets, appears to have borrowed often from them; and, as every man catches something from his companions, his desire of imitating Ariosto's levity<sup>3</sup> has disgraced his work with the "Paradise of Fools"; a fiction not in itself ill-imagined, but too ludicrous for its place.<sup>4</sup>

His play on words, in which he delights too often;<sup>5</sup> his equivocations, which Bentley endeavours to defend by the example of the ancients; his unnecessary and ungraceful use of terms of art; it is not necessary to mention, because they are easily remarked, and generally censured, and at last bear so little proportion to the whole, that they scarcely deserve the attention of a critick.

Such are the faults of that wonderful performance "Paradise Lost;" which he who can put in balance with

<sup>1</sup> "It is true, he runs into a flat of thought, sometimes for a hundred lines together, but it is when he is got into a tract of scripture." Dryden, *Essay on Satire*. S. S. D. vol. xii. p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam adds the remark that this frequent sinking in a single instant is usual with our old writers. *Lit. Hist. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> In *Orlando Furioso*, book xxxiv.

<sup>4</sup> *Paradise Lost*, book iii. line 496. Ald. M. vol. i. p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> See *Spectator*, Nos. 279-297, and Bentley's Notes on *Paradise Lost*, vol. i. p. 642; vol. vi. p. 625.

its beauties must be considered not as nice but as dull, but less to be censured for want of candour, than pitied for want of sensibility.

Of "Paradise Regained,"<sup>1</sup> the general judgement seems now to be right, that it is in many parts elegant, and every-where instructive. It was not to be supposed that the writer of "Paradise Lost" could ever write without great effusions of fancy, and exalted precepts of wisdom. The basis of "Paradise Regained" is narrow; a dialogue without action can never please like an union of the narrative and dramatic powers.<sup>2</sup> Had this poem been written not by Milton, but by some imitator, it would have claimed and received universal praise.

If "Paradise Regained" has been too much depreciated, "Sampson Agonistes"<sup>3</sup> has in requital been too much admired.<sup>4</sup> It could only be by long prejudice, and the bigotry of learning, that Milton could prefer the ancient tragedies, with their encumbrance of a chorus, to the exhibitions of the French and English stages; and it is only by a blind confidence in the reputation of Milton, that a drama can be praised in which the intermediate parts have neither cause nor consequence, neither hasten nor retard the catastrophe.

In this tragedy are however many particular beauties, many just sentiments and striking lines; but it wants that power of attracting the attention which a well-connected plan produces.

Milton would not have excelled in dramatick writing; he knew human nature only in the gross, and had never

<sup>1</sup> Ald. M. vol. ii. p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> For a comparison of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, see Mr. Pattison, in his *Milton*, pp. 191-195, and Landor on the same subject, ed. 1876, vol. iv. pp. 479-489; vol. viii. p. 387.

<sup>3</sup> Ald. M. vol. iii. p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> See *Rambler*, Nos. 139, 140.

studied the shades of character, nor the combinations of concurring, or the perplexity of contending passions. He had read much, and knew what books could teach; but had mingled little in the world, and was deficient in the knowledge which experience must confer.

Through all his greater works there prevails an uniform peculiarity of *Diction*, a mode and cast of expression which bears little resemblance to that of any former writer, and which is so far removed from common use, that an unlearned reader, when he first opens his book, finds himself surprised by new language.<sup>1</sup>

This novelty has been, by those who can find nothing wrong in Milton, imputed to his laborious endeavours after words suitable to the grandeur of his ideas. *Our language*, says Addison, *sunk under him*.<sup>2</sup> But the truth is, that, both in prose and verse, he had formed his style by a perverse and pedantick principle. He was desirous to use English words with a foreign idiom. This in all his prose is discovered and condemned; for there judgment operates freely, neither softened by the beauty, nor awed by the dignity of his thoughts; but such is the power of his poetry, that his call is obeyed without resistance, the reader feels himself in captivity to a higher and a nobler mind, and criticism sinks in admiration.

Milton's style was not modified by his subject: what is shown with greater extent in "Paradise Lost," may be found in "Comus." One source of his peculiarity was his familiarity with the Tuscan poets: the disposition of his words is, I think, frequently Italian; perhaps sometimes combined with other tongues. Of him, at last, may be said what Jonson<sup>3</sup> says of Spenser, that *he wrote no language*,

<sup>1</sup> See Dryden on this point, *Essay on Satire*. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Spectator*, No. 297.

<sup>3</sup> "Spenser in affecting the ancients writ no language." Jonson *Discoveries*. Works, vol. iii. p. 412, ed. Cunningham.



but has formed what Butler<sup>1</sup> calls a *Babylonish Dialect* itself harsh and barbarous, but made by exalted genius and extensive learning, the vehicle of so much instruction and so much pleasure, that, like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity.

Whatever be the faults of his diction, he cannot want the praise of copiousness and variety: he was master of his language in its full extent; and has selected the most judicious words<sup>2</sup> with such diligence, that from his book alone the Art of English Poetry might be learned.

After his diction, something must be said of his versification.<sup>3</sup> *The measure*, he says, *is the English heroick without rhyme*.<sup>4</sup> Of this mode he had many examples among the Italians, and some in his own country. Earl of Surrey is said to have translated one of Virgil's books without rhyme;<sup>5</sup> and, besides our tragedies, a great number of short poems had appeared in blank verse; particularly

<sup>1</sup> Butler says of Sir Hudibras (part i. canto i. line 89):—

“When he pleased to shew't, his speech  
In loftiness of sound was rich,  
A Babylonish dialect,  
Which learned pedants much affect,  
It was a particoloured dress  
Of patch'd and piebald languages,  
’Twas English cut on Greek and Latin  
Like fustian heretofore on satin.”

<sup>2</sup> Hallam observes that from Milton's love of melody arose “one of the most trifling faults, the excessive passion he displays for stringing together sonorous names, sometimes so obscure that the reader associates not his words with them.” Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 469.

<sup>3</sup> On this subject see *Rambler*, Nos. 86, 88, 90, 94.

<sup>4</sup> Preface to *Paradise Lost*, Ald. M. vol. i. p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> In the British Museum is a pretty little copy of *Certain Books of Virgiles Æneïs*, “turned into English meter by the right honorable Henry Earle of Surrey. Apud Ricardum Tottel, 1557.” This volume contains the second and fourth books in blank verse, and is ornamented with a quaint portrait of Virgil in Indian ink.



tending to reconcile the nation to Raleigh's wild attempt upon Guiana,<sup>1</sup> and probably written by Raleigh himself. These petty performances cannot be supposed to have much influenced Milton, who more probably took his hint from Trissino's<sup>2</sup> "*Italia Liberata*;" and, finding blank verse easier than rhyme, was desirous of persuading himself that it is better.

*Rhyme*, he says, and says truly, *is no necessary adjunct of true poetry*.<sup>3</sup> But perhaps, of poetry as a mental operation, metre or musick is no necessary adjunct: it is however by the musick of metre that poetry has been discriminated in all languages; and in languages melodiously constructed with a due proportion of long and short syllables, metre is sufficient. But one language cannot communicate its rules to another: where metre is scanty and imperfect, some help is necessary. The musick of the English heroick line strikes the ear so faintly that it is easily lost, unless all the syllables of every line co-operate together: this co-operation can be only obtained by the preservation of every verse unmingled with another, as a distinct system of sounds; and this distinctness is obtained and preserved by the artifice of rhyme.<sup>4</sup> The variety of pauses, so much boasted by the lovers of blank verse, changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer; and there are only a few skilful and happy

<sup>1</sup> *De Guiana Carmen Epicum*. Authore G. C. Printed in Hakluyt, vol. iii. Oldys ascribes it to George Chapman. Sufficient attention has not been paid to this early and thoughtful specimen of blank verse.

P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> *Giovanni Trissino* (1478-1550), called by Hallam "the father of blank verse," published his *Italia Liberata* in 1548. Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. i. p. 577. See for further references Firth's *Milton*, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> Preface to *Paradise Lost*, Ald. M. vol. i. p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Firth calls attention to Voltaire's remarks on rhyme in connection with *Paradise Lost* in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, art. *Epopée*, Works, vol. xxxv. p. 435, ed. 1819.

readers of Milton,<sup>1</sup> who enable their audience to perceive where the lines end or begin. *Blank verse*, said an ingenious critick,<sup>2</sup> *seems to be verse only to the eye*.

Poetry may subsist without rhyme, but English poetry will not often please; nor can rhyme ever be safely spared but where the subject is able to support itself. Blank verse makes some approach to that which is called the *lapidary style*; has neither the easiness of prose, nor the melody of numbers, and therefore tires by long continuance. Of the Italian writers without rhyme, whom Milton alleges as precedents,<sup>3</sup> not one is popular; what reason could urge in its defence, has been confuted by the ear.

But, whatever be the advantage of rhyme, I cannot prevail on myself to wish that Milton had been a rhymers; for I cannot wish his work to be other than it is; yet, like other heroes, he is to be admired rather than imitated. He that thinks himself capable of astonishing, may write blank verse; but those that hope only to please, must condescend to rhyme.

The highest praise of genius is original invention. Milton cannot be said to have contrived the structure of an epick poem, and therefore owes reverence to that vigour and amplitude of mind to which all generations must be indebted for the art of poetical narration, for the texture of the fable, the variation of incidents, the interposition of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cunningham quotes Cowper's comments on this passage. "Was there ever anything so delightful as the music of *Paradise Lost*? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and deepest notes of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute. Variety without end, and never equalled unless perhaps by Virgil." Cowper to Unwin, Oct. 31st, 1779.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell says, "The gentleman whom he thus characterizes is (as he told Mr. Steward) Mr. Lock, of Norbury Park, in Surrey, whose knowledge and taste in the fine arts is universally celebrated." Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> See Preface to *Paradise Lost*.

dialogue, and all the stratagems that surprise and enchain attention. But, of all the borrowers from Homer, Milton is perhaps the least indebted. He was naturally a thinker for himself, confident of his own abilities, and disdainful of help or hindrance: he did not refuse admission to the thoughts or images of his predecessors, but he did not seek them. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor received support; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favour gained; no exchange of praise or solicitation of support. His great works were performed under discountenance, and in blindness, but difficulties vanished at his touch; <sup>1</sup> he was born for whatever is arduous; and his work is not the greatest of heroick poems, only because it is not the first.

### CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

1608. Dec. 9. Milton born.

1624-5. Feb. 12. Adm. Less. Pens. at Christ's Coll., Cambridge.

1628. Graduates as B.A.

1632. July 3. Graduates as M.A. His famous *Epitaph on Shakespeare* (written two years previously) is published in the Second Folio Shakespeare. Leaves Cambridge. Writes *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* at Horton.

1633 circ. Writes the *Arcades*, p. 102.

1634. Sept. 29. His *Masque*, afterwards called *Comus*, performed.

<sup>1</sup> Bentley has many fine passages on *Paradise Lost*; in conclusion he says, "But I wonder not so much at the Poem itself, though worthy of all wonder; as that the author could so abstract his thoughts from his own troubles, as to be able to make it; that confined in a narrow and, to him a dark chamber, surrounded with cares and fears, he could spatiate at large through the compass of the whole universe, and through all heaven beyond it; could survey all periods of time, from before the creation to the consummation of all things. This theory, no doubt, was a great solace to him in his affliction; but it shows in him a greater strength of spirit, that made him capable of such a solace." Bentley, Preface to *Paradise Lost*, ed. 1732.



1635. Is incorporated M.A. at Oxford, p. 101.  
 1637. Death of his mother, p. 102.  
 1638. Publishes *Lycidas*, and in April begins his travels, p. 102.  
 1639. Returns to England in July or August, p. 107.  
 1641. Publishes *Treatise of Reformation touching Church Discipline* &c., in two books, and *Animadversions upon the Remonstrance Defence against Smectymnus*, p. 112.  
 1642. Publishes *The Reason of Church Government against Prelacy and An Apology, &c., for Smectymnus*, p. 113.  
 1643. Marries Mary Powell in May or June, publishes *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* in August, pp. 115, 116.  
 1644. Publishes his tract *Of Education: to Mr. Sam. Hartlib* (p. 9) and the second *Divorce Tract* and the *Areopagitica*, p. 118.  
 1645. Is reconciled to his Wife, p. 117. Collects and publishes Latin and English Poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* appear for the first time, p. 118.  
 1647. Death of his father and father-in-law.  
 1649. Publishes *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. Is made Secretary for Foreign Tongues of the Council of State, and publishes *Iconoclastes, or the Image-Breaker*, pp. 120, 121.  
 1650. Publishes *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio contra Salmasium*.  
 1652. Becomes totally blind. Death of his first wife, p. 125.  
 1654. Publishes *Defensio Secunda*, p. 127.  
 1655. Publishes *Pro se Defensio contra Alexandrum Morum*, p. 128.  
 1656. Marries Katherine Woodcock, p. 126.  
 1658. Death of Katherine; Milton commemorates her in Sonnet XXIII. Publishes Raleigh's *Cabinet Council*, p. 135.  
 1659. Publishes *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*, p. 136.  
 1660. Publishes *The Ready and Easy way to establish a free Commonwealth*, p. 135.  
 1664. Marries for his third wife Elizabeth Minshull, p. 140.  
 1667. April 27. Publishes *Paradise Lost*, pp. 142-150.  
 1669. Publishes *Accidence commenced Grammar*.  
 1670. Publishes *Hist. Britain, Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*.  
 1672. Publishes *A New Scheme of Logic*, after Ramus, p. 155.  
 1673. Publishes *Treatise of true Religion, Heresy, &c.*  
 1674. Reprints Juvenile Poems, and publishes *Epistolarum Familiarum and Prolusiones*. Dies, November 8.



BUTLER.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

[*Hudibras* appeared in three Parts, London, 1663, 1664, and 1678. The best edition, by Zachary Grey, LL.D., 1744, 2 vols. 8vo, was revised and republished, 1819, 3 vols. *The Genuine Poetical Remains*, with Notes by Thyer, was published 1759, 2 vols. 8vo. See Essay by W. E. Henley, with extracts in Ward's *Select Eng. Poets*, vol. i. p. 396.

The edition used for reference is the *Butler* in the Aldine edition of the British Poets, contracted Ald. *Butler*. The Registers at Oxford and Cambridge have been searched in vain for trace of Butler, and it may safely be concluded that he was not resident at either University.]

## BUTLER.

OF the great author of *Hudibras* there is a life prefixed to the later editions of his poem, by an unknown writer, and therefore of disputable authority; and some account is incidentally given by Wood,<sup>1</sup> who confesses the uncertainty of his own narrative; more however than they knew cannot now be learned, and nothing remains but to compare and copy them.

Samuel Butler was born in the parish of Strensham in Worcestershire, according to his biographer, in 1612. This account Dr. Nash<sup>2</sup> finds confirmed by the register. He was christened Feb. 14.

His father's condition is variously represented. Wood mentions him as competently wealthy;<sup>3</sup> but Mr. Longueville, the son of Butler's principal friend, says he was an honest farmer with some small estate, who made a shift to educate his son at the grammar school of Worcester, under Mr. Henry Bright, from whose care he removed for a short time to Cambridge; but, for a want of money, was never made a member of any college. Wood leaves us rather doubtful whether he went to Cambridge or Oxford;<sup>4</sup> but

<sup>1</sup> Wood, *Athen. Oxon.* (ed. Bliss), vol. iii. p. 874.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Treadway Russel Nash (1725-1811), known only for his *History of Worcestershire*, 1781, and his edition of *Hudibras*, 1793.

<sup>3</sup> Wood, *Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 875.

<sup>4</sup> It is certain that Butler never graduated at Cambridge, and the matriculation books contain no such name within the time at which the legend places his residence there.

at last makes him pass six or seven years at Cambridge, without knowing what hall or college: yet it can hardly be mentioned that he lived so long at either university, but as belonging to one house or another; and it is still less likely that he could have so long inhabited a place of learning with so little distinction as to leave his residence uncertain. Dr. Nash has discovered that his father was owner of a house and a little land, worth about eight pounds a year, still called *Butler's tenement*.

Wood has his information from his brother, whose narrative placed him at Cambridge, in opposition to that of his neighbours which sent him to Oxford. The brother's seems the best authority, till, by confessing his inability to tell his hall or college, he gives reason to suspect that he was resolved to bestow on him an academical education; but durst not name a college, for fear of detection.

He was for some time, according to the author of his Life, clerk to Mr. Jefferys of Earl's-Croomb<sup>1</sup> in Worcestershire, an eminent justice of the peace. In his service he had not only leisure for study, but for recreation: his amusements were musick and painting; and the reward of his pencil was the friendship of the celebrated Cooper.<sup>2</sup> Some pictures, said to be his, were shewn to Dr. Nash, at Earl's Croomb; but when he enquired for them some years afterwards, he found them destroyed, to stop windows, and owns that they hardly deserved a better fate.

He was afterwards admitted into the family of the Countess of Kent, where he had the use of a library; and so much recommended himself to Selden.<sup>3</sup> that he was often

<sup>1</sup> Or Coombe.

<sup>2</sup> The most eminent of English miniature painters, he was also an excellent linguist and musician, (1609-1672). His wife's sister was the mother of Alexander Pope. R. E. Graves in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

<sup>3</sup> John Selden (1584-1654). Clarendon speaks of his learning as "stupendous, and a person whom no character can flatter." His works,



employed by him in literary business. Selden, as is well known, was steward to the Countess,<sup>1</sup> and is supposed to have gained much of his wealth by managing her state.

In what character Butler was admitted into that Lady's service, how long he continued in it, and why he left it, is, like the other incidents of his life, utterly unknown.

The vicissitudes of his condition placed him afterwards in the family of Sir Samuel Luke,<sup>2</sup> one of Cromwell's officers. Here he observed so much of the character of the secretaries, that he is said to have written or begun his poem at this time; and it is likely that such a design would be formed in a place where he saw the principles and practices of the rebels, audacious and undisguised in the confidence of success.

At length the King returned, and the time came in which loyalty hoped for its reward. Butler, however, was only made secretary to the Earl of Carbury, president of the principality of Wales; who conferred on him the stewardship of Ludlow Castle, when the Court of the Marches was revived.

In this part of his life, he married Mrs. Herbert, a gentlewoman of a good family; and lived, says Wood,<sup>3</sup>

published singly during his lifetime, were collected in the *Opera Omnia*. Lond. 1726, fol. His *Table Talk*, Lond. 1689, has been many times printed.

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Grey, Countess of Kent, daughter of Gilbert Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. She lived at Wrest in Bedfordshire, died in 1651, and was buried at Flitton. P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> It is supposed that Sir Samuel Luke is ridiculed under the character Hudibras. See Mitford's *Life*, Ald. *Butler*, vol. i. p. viii. The conjecture is founded on—

“’Tis sung, there is a valiant Mamaluke  
In foreign land yclep’d—;” *Hud.* I. i. 904.

<sup>3</sup> *Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 875.

upon her fortune, having studied the common law, but never practised it. A fortune she had, says his biographer, but it was lost by bad securities.

In 1663 was published the first part, containing three cantos, of the poem of *Hudibras*,<sup>1</sup> which, as Prior relates,<sup>2</sup> was made known at Court by the taste and influence of the Earl of Dorset. When it was known, it was necessarily admired: the king quoted, the courtiers studied, and the whole party of the royalists applauded it.<sup>3</sup> Every eye watched for the golden shower which was to fall upon the author, who certainly was not without his part in the general expectation.<sup>4</sup>

In 1664<sup>5</sup> the second part appeared; the curiosity of the nation was rekindled, and the writer was again praised and elated. But praise was his whole reward. Clarendon, says Wood,<sup>6</sup> gave him reason to hope for "places and employments of value and credit;" but no such advantages

<sup>1</sup> Hallam commences his account of *Hudibras* by observing that it was incomparably more popular than *Paradise Lost*. *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> Prior, *Ded. Poems. Ald. Butler*, vol. i. p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Copies of the first edition of *Hudibras* not very infrequently have inscriptions showing that they were the gift of Charles II. to their first owner. Butler has himself recorded this royal partiality for his book:—

"He never ate, nor drank, nor slept,  
But *Hudibras* still near him kept;  
Nor would he go to church or so,  
But *Hudibras* must with him go."

E. Gosse in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

<sup>4</sup> See Pepys' *Diary*, Dec. 26th, 1662, Feb. 6th, Nov. 28th, and Dec. 10th, 1663.

<sup>5</sup> This date must be erroneous for in the *Mercurius Publicus* for Nov. 20th, 1663, appeared this advertisement, "Newly published the Second Part of *Hudibras* by the Author of the former, which (if possible) hath out done the first sold by John Mertin and James Allestry, at the Bell." MS. note in Aberdeen ed. J. L. P. in the British Museum.

<sup>6</sup> *Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 875.

ever obtain. It is reported, that the King once  
 him three hundred guineas; but of this temporary  
 I find no proof.

He relates that he was secretary to Villiers Duke of  
 gham, when he was Chancellor of Cambridge: this  
 ted by the other writer, who yet allows the Duke to  
 een his frequent benefactor. That both these ac-  
 are false there is reason to suspect, from a story told  
 ke, in his account of the Life of Wycherley, and  
 ome verses which Mr. Thyer has published in the  
 s remains.<sup>1</sup>

Wycherley," says Packe,<sup>2</sup> "had always laid hold  
 opportunity which offered of representing to the  
 f Buckingham how well Mr. Butler had deserved  
 royal family, by writing his inimitable Hudibras;  
 at it was a reproach to the Court, that a person of  
 alty and wit should suffer in obscurity, and under  
 nts he did. The Duke always seemed to hearken to  
 th attention enough; and, after some time, under-  
 recommend his pretensions to his Majesty. Mr.  
 rley, in hopes to keep him steady to his word, ob-  
 of his Grace to name a day, when he might intro-  
 at modest and unfortunate poet to his new patron.  
 an appointment was made, and the place of meeting  
 reed to be the Roebuck. Mr. Butler and his friend  
 ed accordingly: the Duke joined them; but, as the  
 ould have it, the door of the room where they sat  
 en, and his Grace, who had seated himself near it,  
 ng a pimp of his acquaintance (the creature too was  
 ht) trip by with a brace of Ladies, immediately  
 his engagement, to follow another kind of business,  
 h he was more ready than in doing good offices to  
 desert; though no one was better qualified than he,

remains, p. 204 n.

Packe's *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*. 8vo. 1719, p. 183.



both in regard to his fortune and understanding, to protect them; and, from that time to the day of his death, poor Butler never found the least effect of his promise!"

Such is the story. The verses<sup>1</sup> are written with a degree of acrimony, such as neglect and disappointment might naturally excite; and such as it would be hard to imagine Butler capable of expressing against a man who had any claim to his gratitude.

Notwithstanding this discouragement and neglect, he still prosecuted his design; and in 1678 published the third part, which still leaves the poem imperfect and abrupt. How much more he originally intended, or with what events the action was to be concluded, it is vain to conjecture. Nor can it be thought strange that he should stop here, however unexpectedly. To write without reward is sufficiently unpleasing. He had now arrived at an age when he might think it proper to be in jest no longer, and perhaps his health might now begin to fail.

He died in 1680; and Mr. Longueville,<sup>2</sup> having unsuccessfully solicited a subscription for his interment in Westminster Abbey, buried him at his own cost in the church-yard of Covent Garden. Dr. Simon Patrick<sup>3</sup> read the service.

Granger<sup>4</sup> was informed by Dr. Pearce, who named for his authority Mr. Lowndes of the treasury, that Butler

<sup>1</sup> There are no verses about Buckingham in Thyer's *Genuine Remains*, but in his volume of prose there is a "Character of *A Duke of Bucks*," and to this Johnson no doubt refers, though by mistake, speaking of it as "*verses*." Thyer's *Genuine Remains*, vol. ii. p. 72, ed. 1739.

<sup>2</sup> Of whom Roger North has given so pleasing an account in his *Life of the Lord Keeper Guildford*. P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>3</sup> Then Rector of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, afterwards Bishop of Ely. P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>4</sup> James Granger (1716-1776), author of *The Biographical History of England*, including only those persons of whom some engraved portrait is extant.



had an yearly pension of an hundred pounds. This is contradicted by all tradition, by the complaints of Oldham,<sup>1</sup> and by the reproaches of Dryden;<sup>2</sup> and I am afraid will never be confirmed.

About sixty years afterwards, Mr. Barber, a printer, Mayor of London,<sup>3</sup> and a friend to Butler's principles, bestowed on him a monument in Westminster Abbey, thus inscribed:

M. S.

SAMUELIS BUTLERI,

Qui *Strenshamiae* in agro *Vigorn.* nat. 1612, obiit *Lond.* 1680.

Vir doctus imprimis, acer, integer;

Operibus Ingenii, non item præmiis, felix:

*Satyrici* apud nos Carminis Artifex egregius;

Quo simulatæ Religionis Larvam detraxit,

Et Perduellium scelera liberrime exagitavit:

Scriptorum in suo genere, Primus et Postremus.

<sup>1</sup> John Oldham (1653-1683). His *Domestic Chaplain* (see Ward's *Eng. Poets*, vol. ii. p. 435), was doubtless the original of Macaulay's well-known description (*Hist.* vol. i. pp. 327-329). Although his life was so short he was the first satirist of his day. The lines referred to are in his satire against poetry:—

"On Butler who can think without just rage,  
The glory and the scandal of the age."

Oldham's *Poems*, p. 234, ed. Bell.

<sup>2</sup> "Tis enough for one age to have neglected Mr. Cowley and starved Mr. Butler." See S. S. D. vol. i. p. 247. This letter, from Dryden to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, is displayed in the British Museum.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Alderman Barber (1675-1741), owed his "surprising Rise in the World more to cunning and servility than to the genius and high-class character so often displayed by the Printers of old." An amusing Life of him was published by J. Cooper, at the Globe in Paternoster Row, and sold in the pamphlet shops in London and Westminster, 1741, price 1s. John Barber has, however, a still higher claim to grateful remembrance than the erection of Butler's monument. His mayoralty in 1733 was distinguished by the abolition of fees on the release of prisoners from Newgate, "where many Poor Souls perished in Prison for no other crime perhaps but Poverty."

Ne, cui vivo deerant ferè omnia,  
 Deeset etiam mortuo Tumulus,  
 Hoc tandem posito marmore, curavit  
 JOHANNES BARBER, Civis *Londinensis*, 1721.

After his death were published three small volumes of his posthumous works: I know not by whom collected,<sup>1</sup> or by what authority ascertained; and, lately, two volumes more have been printed by Mr. Thyer of Manchester,<sup>2</sup> indubitably genuine. From none of these pieces can his life be traced, or his character discovered. Some verses, in the last collection, shew him to have been among those who ridiculed the institution of the Royal Society, of which the enemies were for some time very numerous and very acrimonious, for what reason it is hard to conceive, since the philosophers professed not to advance doctrines, but to produce facts; and the most zealous enemy of innovation must admit the gradual progress of experience, however he may oppose hypothetical temerity.

In this mist of obscurity passed the life of Butler, a man whose name can only perish with his language. The mode and place of his education are unknown; the events of his life are variously related; and all that can be told with certainty is, that he was poor.

The poem of *Hudibras*<sup>3</sup> is one of those compositions of which a nation may justly boast; as the images which it exhibits are domestick, the sentiments unborrowed and unexpected, and the strain of diction original and peculiar.

<sup>1</sup> *Posthumous Works, in Prose and Verse, with a Key to Hudibras*, by Sir Roger L'Estrange. 6th ed. 1720.

<sup>2</sup> *Remains in Verse and Prose*, published from the original MSS. with notes by R. Thyer, 1759. 8vo. 2 vols.

<sup>3</sup> *Ald. Butler*, vol. i. p. 1. *Hudibras* was in the seventeenth century a well-known name for a swaggering, blustering fellow. Several examples are given in *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, vol. xii. p. 318. Milton gives *Rudhudibrasse* as the name of an early king of Britain.

We must not, however, suffer the pride, which we assume as the countrymen of Butler, to make any encroachment upon justice, nor appropriate those honours which others have a right to share. The poem of Hudibras is not wholly English; the original idea is to be found in the "History of Don Quixote;" a book to which a mind of the greatest powers may be indebted without disgrace.

Cervantes shews a man, who having, by the incessant perusal of incredible tales, subjected his understanding to his imagination, and familiarised his mind by pertinacious meditation to trains of incredible events and scenes of impossible existence, goes out in the pride of knighthood, to redress wrongs, and defend virgins, to rescue captive princesses, and tumble usurpers from their thrones; attended by a squire, whose cunning, too low for the suspicion of a generous mind, enables him often to cheat his master.

The hero of Butler is a Presbyterian Justice, who, in the confidence of legal authority, and the rage of zealous ignorance, ranges the country to repress superstition and correct abuses, accompanied by an Independent Clerk, disputatious and obstinate, with whom he often debates, but never conquers him.

Cervantes had so much kindness for Don Quixote, that, however he embarrasses him with absurd distresses, he gives him so much sense and virtue as may preserve our esteem: wherever he is, or whatever he does, he is made by matchless dexterity commonly ridiculous, but never contemptible.

But for poor Hudibras, his poet had no tenderness: he chuses not that any pity should be shewn or respect paid him: he gives him up at once to laughter and contempt, without any quality that can dignify or protect him.

In forming the character of Hudibras, and describing his person and habiliments, the author seems to labour with a tumultuous confusion of dissimilar ideas. He had read the



history of the mock knights-errant; he knew the notions and manners of a presbyterian magistrate, and tried to unite the absurdities of both, however distant, in one personage. Thus he gives him that pedantick ostentation of knowledge which has no relation to chivalry, and loads him with martial encumbrances that can add nothing to his civil dignity. He sends him out *a colonelling*, and yet never brings him within sight of war.

If Hudibras be considered as the representative of the presbyterians, it is not easy to say why his weapons should be represented as ridiculous or useless; for, whatever judgement might be passed upon their knowledge or their arguments, experience had sufficiently shown that their swords were not to be despised.

The hero, thus compounded of swaggerer and pedant, of knight and justice, is led forth to action, with his squire Ralpho, an Independent enthusiast.

Of the contexture of events planned by the author, which is called the action of the poem, since it is left imperfect, no judgement can be made. It is probable, that the hero was to be led through many luckless adventures, which would give occasion, like his attack upon the *bear and fiddle*,<sup>1</sup> to expose the ridiculous rigour of the sectaries; like his encounter with Sidrophel and Whacum,<sup>2</sup> to make superstition and credulity contemptible; or, like his recourse to the low retailer of the law, discover the fraudulent practices of different professions.

What series of events he would have formed, or in what manner he would have rewarded or punished his hero, it is now vain to conjecture. His work must have had, as it seems, the defect which Dryden imputes to Spenser;<sup>3</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> *Hudibras*, i. 2; Ald. *Butler*, vol. i. pp. 70-80.

<sup>2</sup> *Hudibras*, ii. 3; Ald. *Butler*, vol. i. pp. 188, 195.

<sup>3</sup> Dryden observes that "there is no uniformity in the design of Spenser: he aims at the accomplishment of no one action; he raises up



action could not have been one; there could only have been a succession of incidents, each of which might have happened without the rest, and which could not all co-operate to any single conclusion.

The discontinuity of the action might however have been easily forgiven, if there had been action enough; but I believe every reader regrets the paucity of events, and complains that in the poem of *Hudibras*, as in the history of *Thucydides*,<sup>1</sup> there is more said than done. The scenes are too seldom changed, and the attention is tired with long conversation.

It is indeed much more easy to form dialogues than to contrive adventures. Every position makes way for an argument, and every objection dictates an answer. When two disputants are engaged upon a complicated and extensive question, the difficulty is not to continue, but to end the controversy. But whether it be that we comprehend but few of the possibilities of life, or that life itself affords but little variety, every man who has tried knows how much labour it will cost to form such a combination of circumstances, as shall have at once the grace of novelty and credibility, and delight fancy without violence to reason.

Perhaps the Dialogue of this poem is not perfect. Some power of engaging the attention might have been added to it, by quicker reciprocation, by seasonable interruptions, by sudden questions, and by a nearer approach to dramatick spriteliness; without which, fictitious speeches will always tire, however sparkling with sentences, and however variegated with allusions.

The great source of pleasure is variety. Uniformity must tire at last, though it be uniformity of excellence. We love to expect; and, when expectation is disappointed

a hero for every one of his adventures," &c. &c. *Essay on Satire*, S. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 17.

<sup>1</sup> *De Bello Peloponnesiaco*.

or gratified, we want to be again expecting. For this impatience of the present, whoever would please, must make provision. The skilful writer *irritat, mulcet*, makes a due distribution of the still and animated parts. It is for want of this artful intertexture, and those necessary changes, that the whole of a book may be tedious, though all the parts are praised.

If unexhaustible wit could give perpetual pleasure, no eye would ever leave half-read the work of Butler; for what poet has ever brought so many remote images so happily together? It is scarcely possible to peruse a page without finding some association of images that was never found before. By the first paragraph the reader is amused by the next he is delighted, and by a few more strained to astonishment; but astonishment is a toilsome pleasure; he is soon weary of wondering, and longs to be diverted.

"Omnia vult belle Matho dicere, dic aliquando  
Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male."<sup>1</sup>

Imagination is useless without knowledge: nature gives in vain the power of combination, unless study and observation supply materials to be combined. Butler's treasures of knowledge appear proportioned to his expence: whatever topick employs his mind, he shews himself qualified to expand and illustrate it with all the accessories that books can furnish: he is found not only to have travelled the beaten road, but the bye-paths of literature; not only to have taken general surveys, but to have examined particulars with minute inspection.

If the French boast the learning of Rabelais, we need not be afraid of confronting them with Butler.

But the most valuable parts of his performance are

<sup>1</sup> "Omnia vis belle, Matho, dicere; dic aliquando  
Et bene; dic neutrum; dic aliquando male."

Martial, *Epigr.* x. 46.

those which retired study and native wit cannot supply. He that merely makes a book from books may be useful, but can scarcely be great. Butler had not suffered life to glide beside him unseen or unobserved. He had watched with great diligence the operations of human nature, and traced the effects of opinion, humour, interest, and passion. From such remarks proceeded that great number of sententious distichs which have passed into conversation, and are added as proverbial axioms to the general stock of practical knowledge.

When any work has been viewed and admired, the first question of intelligent curiosity is, how was it performed? Hudibras was not a hasty effusion; it was not produced by a sudden tumult of imagination, or a short paroxysm of violent labour. To accumulate such a mass of sentiments at the call of accidental desire, or of sudden necessity, is beyond the reach and power of the most active and comprehensive mind. I am informed by Mr. Thyer of Manchester,<sup>1</sup> the excellent editor of this author's reliques, that he could shew something like Hudibras in prose.<sup>2</sup> He has in his possession the common-place book, in which Butler deposited, not such events or precepts as are gathered by reading; but such remarks, similitudes, allusions, assemblages, or inferences, as occasion prompted, or meditation reduced; those thoughts that were generated in his own mind, and might be usefully applied to some future purpose. Such is the labour of those who write for immortality.

But human works are not easily found without a perishable part. Of the ancient poets every reader feels the mythology tedious and oppressive. Of Hudibras, the manners, being founded on opinions, are temporary and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* *supr.* p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> This collection of MSS. was bought by the British Museum (MSS. Addit. 32625. 6.) in 1885.



local, and therefore become every day less intelligible, and less striking. What Cicero says<sup>1</sup> of philosophy is likewise of wit and humour, that "time effaces the fictions of opinion, and confirms the determinations of Nature." Such manners as depend upon standing relations and general passions are co-extended with the race of man; but those modifications of life, and peculiarities of practice which are the progeny of error and perverseness, or the best of some accidental influence or transient persuasion must perish with their parents.

Much therefore of that humour which transported the last century with merriment is lost to us, who do not know the sour solemnity, the sullen superstition, the gloom, moroseness, and the stubborn scruples of the ancient Puritans; or, if we knew them, derive our information only from books, or from tradition, have never had them before our eyes, and cannot but by recollection and study understand the lines in which they are satirised. Our grandfathers knew the picture from the life; we judge the life by contemplating the picture.

It is scarcely possible, in the regularity and composure of the present time, to image the tumult of absurdity, the clamour of contradiction, which perplexed doctrine, and ordered practice, and disturbed both publick and private quiet, in that age, when subordination was broken, and awe was hissed away; when any unsettled innovator could hatch a half-formed notion produced it to the publick; when every man might become a preacher, and almost every preacher could collect a congregation.

The wisdom of the nation is very reasonably supposed to reside in the parliament. What can be concluded of the lower classes of the people, when in one of the parliaments summoned by Cromwell it was seriously proposed

<sup>1</sup> "Opinionum enim commenta delet dies; naturae judicia confirmat."—Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, lib. 2. p. 26, Ald. ed.



hat all the records in the Tower should be burnt, that all memory of things past should be effaced, and that the whole system of life should commence anew?

We have never been witnesses of animosities excited by the use of minced pies and plumb porridge; nor seen with what abhorrence those who could eat them at all other times of the year would shrink from them in December. An old Puritan, who was alive in my childhood, being at one of the feasts of the church invited by a neighbour to partake his cheer, told him, that, if he would treat him at an alehouse with beer, brewed for all times and seasons, he should accept his kindness, but would have none of his superstitious meats or drinks.

One of the puritanical tenets was the illegality of all games of chance; and he that reads Gataker<sup>1</sup> upon "Lots," may see how much learning and reason one of the first scholars of his age thought necessary, to prove that it was no crime to throw a die, or play at cards, or to hide a shilling for the reckoning.

Astrology, however, against which so much of the satire is directed, was not more the folly of the Puritans than of others. It had in that time a very extensive dominion. Its predictions raised hopes and fears in minds which ought to have rejected it with contempt. In hazardous undertakings, care was taken to begin under the influence of a propitious planet; and when the king was prisoner in Carisbrook Castle, an astrologer was consulted what hour would be found most favourable to an escape.

What effect this poem had upon the publick, whether it shamed imposture or reclaimed credulity, is not easily determined. Cheats can seldom stand long against

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Gataker (1574-1654), published, in 1619, *A Discourse of the Nature and Use of Lots: a Treatise Historical and Theological*. His notes on *Marcus Antoninus* are a mine of learning, and furnished many quotations to the divines of his own and succeeding generations.

laughter. It is certain that the credit of planetary intelligence wore fast away; though some men of knowledge, and Dryden among them,<sup>1</sup> continued to believe that conjunctions and oppositions had a great part in the distribution of good or evil, and in the government of sublunary things.

X Poetical Action ought to be probable upon certain suppositions, and such probability as burlesque requires is here violated only by one incident. Nothing can shew more plainly the necessity of doing something, and the difficulty of finding something to do, than that Butler was reduced to transfer to his hero the flagellation of Sancho, not the most agreeable fiction of Cervantes; very suitable indeed to the manners of that age and nation, which ascribed wonderful efficacy to voluntary penances; but so remote from the practice and opinions of the Hudibrastick time, that judgement and imagination are alike offended.

The diction of this poem is grossly familiar, and the numbers purposely neglected, except in a few places where the thoughts by their native excellence secure themselves from violation, being such as mean language cannot express. The mode of versification has been blamed by Dryden, who regrets that the heroick measure was not rather chosen. To the critical sentence of Dryden the highest reverence would be due, were not his decisions often precipitate, and his opinions immature. When he wished to change the measure, he probably would have been willing to change more. If he intended that, when the numbers were heroick, the diction should still remain vulgar, he planned a very heterogeneous and unnatural composition. If he preferred a general stateliness both of sound and words, he can be only understood to wish that Butler had undertaken a different work.

<sup>1</sup> *Vid. infr. Life of Dryden.*

The measure is quick, spritely, and colloquial, suitable to the vulgarity of the words and the levity of the sentiments. But such numbers and such diction can gain regard only when they are used by a writer whose vigour of fancy and copiousness of knowledge entitle him to contempt of ornaments, and who, in confidence of the novelty and justness of his conceptions, can afford to throw metaphors and epithets away. To another that conveys common thoughts in careless versification, it will only be said, 'Pauper videri Cinna vult, & est pauper.'<sup>1</sup> The meaning and diction will be worthy of each other, and criticism may justly doom them to perish together.

Nor even though another Butler should arise, would another Hudibras obtain the same regard. Burlesque consists in a disproportion between the style and the sentiments, or between the adventitious sentiments and the fundamental subject. It therefore, like all bodies compounded of heterogeneous parts, contains in it a principle of corruption. All disproportion is unnatural; and from what is unnatural we can derive only the pleasure which novelty produces. We admire it awhile as a strange thing; but, when it is no longer strange, we perceive its deformity. It is a kind of artifice, which by frequent repetition detects itself; and the reader, learning in time what he is to expect, lays down his book, as the spectator turns away from a second exhibition of those tricks, of which the only use is to shew that they can be played.

<sup>1</sup> Martial, *Epigr.* viii. 19.

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**ROCHESTER.**

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## ROCHESTER.

WILMOT, afterwards Earl of Rochester, the son of the first Earl of Rochester, better known by the title of Wilmot, so often mentioned in Clarendon's History, was born April 10, 1647, at Ditchley in Oxfordshire. He received a grammatical education at the school of Burford, and was sent to a nobleman into Wadham College, in 1659, when he was five years old; and in 1661, at fourteen, was, with other persons of high rank, made master of arts by the University of London in person.

He travelled afterwards into France and Italy; and, at length, he devoted himself to the Court. In 1665 he went to the Sandwich,<sup>1</sup> and distinguished himself at Bergen by his intrepidity; and the next summer served on board Sir Edward Spragge, who, in the heat of the engagement, having a message of reproof to send to the captains, could find no man ready to carry it but one who, in an open boat, went and returned amidst a shower of shot.

His reputation for bravery was not lasting: he was reproached with slinking away in street quarrels, and his companions to shift as they could without him; and the late Duke of Buckingham has left a story of his fight with him.

He had very early an inclination to intemperance, which

was in wait for the Dutch East India fleet. The Dutch ships arrived at the port, and an attack was therefore made on that port.

he totally subdued in his travels; but, when he became a courtier, he unhappily addicted himself to dissolute and vicious company, by which his principles were corrupted, and his manners depraved. He lost all sense of religious restraint; and, finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws which he was resolved not to obey, sheltered his wickedness behind infidelity.

As he excelled in that noisy and licentious merriment which wine incites, his companions eagerly encouraged him in excess, and he willingly indulged it; till, as he confessed to Dr. Burnet, he was for five years together continually drunk, or so much inflamed by frequent ebriety, as in no interval to be master of himself.

In this state he played many frolicks, which it is not for his honour that we should remember, and which are not now distinctly known. He often pursued low amours in mean disguises, and always acted with great exactness and dexterity the characters which he assumed.

He once erected a stage on Tower-hill, and harangued the populace as a mountebank; and, having made physick part of his study, is said to have practised it successfully.

He was so much in favour with King Charles, that he was made one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber, and comptroller of Woodstock Park.

Having an active and inquisitive mind, he never, except in his paroxysms of intemperance, was wholly negligent of study: he read what is considered as polite learning so much, that he is mentioned by Wood as the greatest scholar of all the nobility. Sometimes he retired into the country, and amused himself with writing libels, in which he did not pretend to confine himself to truth.

His favourite author in French was Boileau, and in English Cowley.

Thus in a course of drunken gaiety, and gross sensuality, with intervals of study perhaps yet more criminal, with an



avowed contempt of all decency and order, a total disregard to every moral, and a resolute denial of every religious obligation, he lived worthless and useless, and blazed out his youth and his health in lavish voluptuousness; till, at the age of one and thirty, he had exhausted the fund of life, and reduced himself to a state of weakness and decay.

At this time he was led to an acquaintance with Dr. Burnet,<sup>1</sup> to whom he laid open with great freedom the tenour of his opinions, and the course of his life, and from whom he received such conviction of the reasonableness of moral duty, and the truth of Christianity, as produced a total change both of his manners and opinions. The account of those salutary conferences is given by Burnet, in a book intituled, "Some Passages of the Life and Death of John Earl of Rochester;" which the critick ought to read for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety. It were an injury to the reader to offer him an abridgement.

He died July 26, 1680, before he had completed his thirty-fourth year; and was so worn away by long illness, that life went out without a struggle.

Lord Rochester was eminent for the vigour of his colloquial wit, and remarkable for many wild pranks and sallies of extravagance.<sup>2</sup> The glare of his general character diffused itself upon his writings; the compositions of a

<sup>1</sup> Burnet, Gilbert, Bishop of Salisbury (1643-1715), born in Edinburgh, educated at Aberdeen. A prominent figure in political life, and singularly effective preacher, he received the unusual compliment of being thanked by the House of Commons for his poems; but he is best known to us from his history of his own times, which is invaluable as a candid narrative and work of reference.

<sup>2</sup> The best portrait of Lord Rochester is the Sir Peter Lely, at Hinchinbrooke, the seat of the Earl of Sandwich. There is a large engraving of him by R. White (1681), considered the best print of him.

man whose name was heard so often, were certain of attention, and from many readers certain of applause. This blaze of reputation is not yet quite extinguished; and his poetry still retains some splendour beyond that which genius has bestowed.

Wood and Burnet give us reason to believe, that much was imputed to him which he did not write. I know not by whom the original collection was made, or by what authority its genuineness was ascertained. The first edition was published the year of his death, with an air of concealment, professing in the title page to be printed at *Antwerp*.<sup>1</sup>

Of some of the pieces, however, there is no doubt. The "Imitation of Horace's Satire," the "Verses to Lord Mulgrave," the "Satire against Man," the "Verses upon *Nothing*," and perhaps some others, are I believe genuine, and perhaps most of those which the late collection<sup>2</sup> exhibits.

As he cannot be supposed to have found leisure for any course of continued study, his pieces are commonly short, such as one fit of resolution would produce.

His songs have no particular character: they tell, like other songs, in smooth and easy language, of scorn and kindness, dismissal and desertion, absence and inconstancy, with the common places of artificial courtship. They are commonly smooth and easy; but have little nature, and little sentiment.

His imitation of Horace on Lucilius is not inelegant or unhappy. In the reign of Charles the Second began that adaptation, which has since been very frequent, of ancient poetry to present times; and perhaps few will be found where the parallelism is better preserved than in this.

<sup>1</sup> With the date 1680.

<sup>2</sup> The collection, that is, for which these lives were written.

the versification is indeed sometimes careless, but it is sometimes vigorous and weighty.

The strongest effort of his Muse is his poem upon "Nothing." He is not the first who has chosen this subject for the boast of his fertility. There is a poem entitled "Nihil" in Latin by Passerat, a poet and critic of the sixteenth century in France; who, in his own language expresses his zeal for good poetry thus

"—Mullier mea quærent  
Sint modo carminibus non vacans meis."

His works are not common and therefore I must not dwell in his verses.

In examining this performance "Nothing" must be considered as having not only a suggestive but a positive signification; as I need not here discuss "nothing"; and *nothing* is a very powerful personification. In the first part of the sentence it is a *thing* suggestive of the second it is taken positively, as in *nothing* is one of Boileau's lines it was a question whether to say, *rien* or *à ne rien faire*; and the first was preferred, because it gave *rien* a sense in which our poetical *Nothing* can be a subject only in its positive sense and with a sense given it in the first line.

"—Nothing, then, aside whether it is a thing."

In this line, I know not whether to trace the allusion to the curious book "*de Unura*," by Xenoctenus which explains all the qualities of *Unura*, concludes with a poem on *nothing* these lines:

<sup>1</sup> Jean Passerat (1534-1592). Professor of Rhetoric in the College of France. This celebrated man was a great student of *Unura*, his works are numerous and highly esteemed.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Wauveret. *Discours de la Unura*. Paris, 1635, a learned man, a scholar, born 1576, died 1635, a learned man in *Unura*.

"Jam primum terram validis circumspice claustris  
 Suspensam totam, decus admirabile mundi  
 Terrasque tractusque maris, camposque liquentes  
 Aeris & vasti laqueata palatia cœli—  
 Omnibus UMBRA prior."

The positive sense is generally preserved, with great skill, through the whole poem; though sometimes, in a subordinate sense, the negative *nothing* is injudiciously mingled. Passerat confounds the two senses.

Another of his most vigorous pieces is his Lampoon on Sir Car Scroop,<sup>1</sup> who, in a poem called "The Praise of Satire," had some lines like these:<sup>2</sup>

"He who can push into a midnight fray  
 His brave companion, and then run away,  
 Leaving him to be murder'd in the street,  
 Then put it off with some buffoon conceit;  
 Him, thus dishonour'd, for a wit you own,  
 And court him as top fidler of the town."

This was meant of Rochester, whose *buffoon conceit* was, I suppose, a saying often mentioned, that *every Man would be a Coward if he durst*; and drew from him those furious verses; to which Scroop made in reply an epigram, ending with these lines:

"Thou canst hurt no man's fame with thy ill word;  
 Thy pen is full as harmless as thy sword."

<sup>1</sup> *Sir Car Scroop*, Bart. date of birth unknown, but was at Wadham College in 1664, and died 1680. He translated from Ovid and Virgil; wrote *The Defence of Satyr*, &c. &c. He is jeered at by Rochester as a "Purblind Knight, who squints more in his judgment than his sight." *Poems*, ed. Rymer, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> I quote from memory.—JOHNSON. On Johnson's powerful memory, and his mode of slightly altering obscure quotations to suit his purpose, see Malone, in Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. ii. pp. 130-32, and for his own saying, "Memory will play us strange tricks," &c. *Ibid.* vol. p. 50.



Of the satire against *Mou*, Rochester can only claim what remains when all Boileau's part<sup>1</sup> is taken away.

In all his works<sup>2</sup> there is sprightliness and vigour, and every where may be found tokens of a mind which study might have carried to excellence. What more can be expected from a life spent in ostentatious contempt of regularity, and ended before the abilities of many other men began to be displayed?<sup>3</sup>

"Poema<sup>4</sup> CL V. JOANNIS PASSECRATII.

"Regii in Academia Parisiensi Professoris.

"Ad ornatissimum virum ERICUM MANNIUM.

"Janus adest, festæ poscunt sua dona Kalendæ.  
Munus abest festis quod possim offerre Kalendis.  
Siccine Castalius nobis exaruit humor?  
Usque adeo ingenii nostri est exhausta facultas,  
Immunem ut videat redeuntis janitor auri?  
Quod nusquam est, potius nova per vestigia queram.

<sup>1</sup> See Boileau's Eighth Satire à M.M. (Morel), *Docteur de Sorbonne*, filled by the author *La Satire de l'homme*, composed 1667, and published the following year separately, and then in the third edition of his satires.

<sup>2</sup> The best edition of Rochester's Poems is that of 1661. A few of his songs are included in Ward's *Sel. Eng. Poets*, vol. ii. p. 425.

<sup>3</sup> Dryden dedicated to him his *Marriage a la Mode* (1672), *Love and Honour* (1677), and Crowne his *Charles the Eighth of France* (1672). In Dryden's dedication there is a remarkable passage: "Your lordship (he has been praising 'some papers of verse' which he had seen) has but another step to make, and from the patron of wit you may become its tyrant, and oppress our little reputations with more ease than you now protect them." This was prophetic. He oppressed Dryden, Otway, and Crowne, lampooned all three, and had Dryden mangled.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>4</sup> NIHIL. Per Joannem Passecratum. P. R. Paris, 1588; afterwards in *Kalendæ Januariæ et varia quedam poemata*. Paris, 1597. Reprinted 1603.

Ecce autem partes dum sese versat in omnes  
 Invenit mea Musa NIHIL, ne despice munus.  
 Nam NIHIL est gemmis, NIHIL est pretiosius auro.  
 Huc animum, huc igitur vultus adverte benignos :  
 Res nova narratur quæ nulli audita priorum,  
 Ausonii & Graii dixerunt cætera vates,  
 Ausoniæ indictum NIHIL est Græcæque Camænæ.

E cælo quacunque Ceres sua prospicit arva,  
 Aut genitor liquidis orbem complectitur ulnis  
 Oceanus, NIHIL interitus & originis expers.  
 Immortale NIHIL, NIHIL omni parte beatum.  
 Quodd si hinc majestas & vis divina probatur,  
 Num quid honore deum, num quid dignabimur aris ?  
 Conspectu lucis NIHIL est jucundius almæ,  
 Vere NIHIL, NIHIL irriguo formosius horto,  
 Floridius pratis, Zephyri clementius aura ;  
 In bello sanctum NIHIL est, Martisque tumultu :  
 Justum in pace NIHIL, NIHIL est in fœdere tutum.  
 Felix cui NIHIL est, (fuerant hæc vota Tibullo)  
 Non timet insidias : fures, incendia temnit :  
 Sollicitas sequitur nullo sub iudice lites.  
 Ille ipse invictis qui subjicit omnia fati  
 Zenonis sapiens, NIHIL admiratur & optat.  
 Socraticique gregis fuit ista scientia quondam,  
 Scire NIHIL, studio cui nunc incumbitur uni.  
 Nec quicquam in ludo mavult didicisse juventus,  
 Ad magnus quia ducit opes, & culmen honorum.  
 Nosce NIHIL, nosces fertur quod Pythagoreæ  
 Grano hære fabæ, cui vox adjuncta negantis.  
 Multi Mercurio freti duce viscera terræ  
 Pura liquefaciunt simul, & patrimonia miscent,  
 Arcano instantes operi, & carbonibus atris,  
 Qui tandem exhausti damnis, fractique labore,  
 Inveniunt atque inventum NIHIL usque requirunt.  
 Hoc dimetiri non ulla decempeda possit :  
 Nec numeret Libycæ numerum qui callet arenæ :  
 Et Phæbo ignotum NIHIL est, NIHIL altius astris.  
 Tūque, tibi licet eximium sit mentis acumen,  
 Omnem in naturam penetrans, & in abdita rerum,

Pace tua, Memmi, NIHIL ignorare vidēris.  
Sole tamen NIHIL est, & puro clarius igne.  
Tange NIHIL, dicesque NIHIL sine corpore tangi.  
Cerne NIHIL, cerni dices NIHIL absque colore.  
Surdum audit loquitúrque NIHIL sine voce, volátque  
Absque ope pennarum, & graditur sine cruribus ullis.  
Absque loco motaque NIHIL per inane vagatur.  
Humano generi utilius NIHIL arte medendi.  
Ne rhombos igitur, neu Thessala murmura tentet  
Idalia vacuum trajectus arundine pectus,  
Neu legat Idæo Dictæum in vertice gramen.  
Vulneribus sævi NIHIL auxiliatur amoris.  
Vexerit & quemvis trans mœstas portitor undas,  
Ad superos imo NIHIL hunc revocabit ab orco.  
Inferni NIHIL inflectit præcordia regis,  
Parcarúmque colos, & inexorabile pensum  
Obruta Phlegræis campis Titania pubes  
Fulmineo sensit NIHIL esse potentius ictu :  
Porrigitur magni NIHIL extra mœnia mundi .  
Díque NIHIL metuunt. Quid longo carmine plura  
Commemo rem? virtute NIHIL præstantius ipsa,  
Splendidius NIHIL est; NIHIL est Jove denique majus.  
Sed tempus finem argutis imponere nugis :  
Ne tibi si multa laudem mea carmina charta,  
De NIHILO NIHILI pariant fastidia versus."

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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3.



ROSCOMMON.



## ROSCOMMON.

WENTWORTH DILLON, Earl of Roscommon,<sup>1</sup> was the son of James Dillon and Elizabeth Wentworth, sister to the Earl of Strafford. He was born in Ireland,<sup>2</sup> during the lieutenancy of Strafford, who, being both his uncle and his godfather, gave him his own surname. His father, the third earl of Roscommon, had been converted to the protestant religion; and when the popish rebellion broke out, Strafford thinking the family in great danger from the fury of the Irish, sent for his godson, and placed him at his own seat in Yorkshire, where he was instructed in Latin; which he learned so as to write it with purity and elegance, though he was never able to retain the rules of grammar.

Such is the account given by Mr. Fenton, from whose notes on Waller<sup>3</sup> most of this account must be borrowed, though I know not whether all that he relates is certain. The instructor whom he assigns to Roscommon is one J. Hall, by whom he cannot mean the famous Hall,<sup>4</sup> then an old man and a bishop.

Johnson wrote a *Life of Roscommon* for the *Gentleman's Magazine* May, 1748.

1633.

The works of Edmund Waller, Esq. in verse and prose, published by Mr. Fenton. Lond. Tonson. 1729. 4to. p. cxxxiv. For a notice of this "splendid edition," *vid. infr.* vol. *Life of Fenton*.

*Vid. supr.* p. 112 n. Roscommon's tutor may have been a son of the

When the storm broke out upon Strafford, his house was a shelter no longer; and Dillen, by the advice of Usher,<sup>1</sup> was sent to Caen, where the Protestants had then an university, and continued his studies under Bochart.<sup>2</sup>

Young Dillen, who was sent to study under Bochart, and who is represented as having already made great proficiency in literature, could not be more than nine years old. Strafford went to govern Ireland in 1633, and was put to death eight years afterwards. That he was sent to Caen, is certain; that he was a great scholar, may be doubted.

At Caen he is said to have had some preternatural intelligence of his father's death.

"The lord Roscommon, being a boy of ten years of age, at Caen in Normandy, one day was, as it were, madly extravagant in playing, leaping, getting over the tables, boards, &c. He was wont to be sober enough; they said, God grant this bodes no ill-luck to him! In the heat of this extravagant fit, he cries out, *My father is dead*. A fortnight after, news came from Ireland that his father was dead. This account I had from Mr. Knolles, who was his governor, and then with him,—since secretary to the earl of Strafford; and I have heard his lordship's relations confirm the same." *Aubrey's Miscellany*.

famous Bishop of Norwich—Robert, who was Archdeacon of Cornwall, or George (1612-1668), Fellow of Exeter Coll. Oxon, afterwards Bishop of Chester.

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop of Armagh, *vid. sup.* p. 112. "The great luminary of the Irish Church; and a greater no church could boast of: at least in modern times," Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. ii. p. 130. He was in England in 1623, engaged, in connection with Bochart, in preparing for the controversy with the Jesuits.

<sup>2</sup> Bochart (1599-1667). This learned Frenchman was pastor of the Protestant Church at Caen, where he held his celebrated conferences or disputes with the Jesuits. He had visited London before 1628.



The present age is very little inclined to favour any accounts of this kind, nor will the name of Aubrey much recommend it to credit: it ought not, however, to be omitted, because better evidence of a fact cannot easily be found than is here offered, and it must be by preserving such relations that we may at last judge how much they are to be regarded. If we stay to examine this account, we shall see difficulties on both sides; here is a relation of a fact given by a man who had no interest to deceive, and who could not be deceived himself; and here is, on the other hand, a miracle which produces no effect; the order of nature is interrupted, to discover not a future but only a distant event, the knowledge of which is of no use to him to whom it is revealed. Between these difficulties, what way shall be found? Is reason or testimony to be rejected? I believe what Osborne<sup>1</sup> says of an appearance of sanctity may be applied to such impulses or anticipations as this: *Do not wholly slight them, because they may be true: but do not easily trust them, because they may be false.*

The state both of England and Ireland was at this time such, that he who was absent from either country had very little temptation to return: and therefore Roscommon, when he left Caen, travelled into Italy, and amused himself with its antiquities, and particularly with medals, in which he acquired uncommon skill.

<sup>1</sup> Francis Osborne (1589-1659). A writer of considerable ability, whose works were collected and published in 1689, and again in 1722. This quotation is from "*Advice to a Son; or Directions for your better Conduct through the various and most important Encounters of this Life.*" Oxford, 5th edition, 1656; p. 153: "Despise not a profession of Holiness because it may be true: But have a care how you trust it for feare it should be false. The coat of Christ being more in fashion than his Practice." This book was extremely popular among the young students, but supposed to be atheistical and altogether so objectionable that it was proposed to burn it publicly. This was never done, but the sale was strictly forbidden.

At the Restoration, with the other friends of monarchy, he came to England, was made captain of the band of pensioners, and learned so much of the dissoluteness of the court, that he addicted himself immoderately to gaming, by which he was engaged in frequent quarrels, and which undoubtedly brought upon him its usual concomitants, extravagance and distress.

After some time a dispute about part of his estate forced him into Ireland, where he was made by the duke of Ormond captain of the guards, and met with an adventure thus related by Fenton.

“He was at Dublin as much as ever distempered with the same fatal affection for play, which engaged him in one adventure that well deserves to be related. As he returned to his lodgings from a gaming-table, he was attacked in the dark by three ruffians, who were employed to assassinate him. The Earl defended himself with so much resolution, that he dispatched one of the aggressors; whilst a gentleman, accidentally passing that way, interposed, and disarmed another; the third secured himself by flight. This generous assistant was a disbanded officer, of a good family and fair reputation; who, by what we call the partiality of fortune, to avoid censuring the iniquities of the times, wanted even a plain suit of cloaths to make a decent appearance at the castle. But his lordship, on this occasion, presenting him to the Duke of Ormond, with great importunity prevailed with his grace, that he might resign his post of captain of the guards to his friend; which for about three years the gentleman enjoyed, and, upon his death, the duke returned the commission to his generous benefactor.”

When he had finished his business, he had returned to London; was made Master of the Horse to the Dutchess of York; and married the Lady Frances, daughter of the Earl of Burlington, and widow of Colonel Courteney.

He now busied his mind with literary projects, and formed the plan of a society for refining our language, and fixing its standard; *in imitation*, says Fenton,<sup>1</sup> *of those learned and polite societies with which he had been acquainted abroad*. In this design his friend Dryden is said to have assisted him.

The same design, it is well known, was revived by Dr. Swift<sup>2</sup> in the ministry of Oxford; but it has never since been publicly mentioned, though at that time great expectations were formed by some of its establishment and its effects. Such a society might, perhaps, without much difficulty, be collected; but that it would produce what is expected from it, may be doubted.

The Italian academy seems to have obtained its end. The language was refined, and so fixed that it has changed but little. The French academy thought that they refined

<sup>1</sup> These learned and polite societies were, doubtless, the Academy Della Crusca in Florence, established in 1588; and eclipsing all the numerous academies of Italy; the Academy of Humorists in Rome; the Rozzi and the Intronati in Siena; and possibly the Lincei in Rome; although its founder Cesi died in 1630; and it did not very long survive the loss of its chief. This academy stood on a higher level than the rest. Its members cultivated poetry and elegant literature, but physical science was their peculiar object. Porta, Galileo, Colonna, and many other distinguished men were enrolled among the Lynsees. The French Academy, established 1635, had, by the time of Roscommon's travels, attained great distinction. Its famous criticism on Corneille's *Tragedie du Cid* was published in 1637, and in 1649 the epoch making *Remarques sur la Langue Française*, by Vaugelas. Its great labour, the *Standard National Dictionary*, was slowly proceeding (published 1694, and revised and perfected 1700), but the French Academy had been so judicious in the choice of members and the general tenor of its proceedings, that it stood very high in public estimation, and a voluntary deference was commonly shown to its authority. See Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. p. 525.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid. infr.* vol. iii. *Life of Swift* for Johnson's remarks on Swift's Letter to the Earl of Oxford, a "*Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue*," vol. iii. p. 369.



their language, and doubtless thought rightly; but the event has not shewn that they fixed it; for the French of the present time is very different from that of the last century.

In this country an academy could be expected to do but little. If an academician's place were profitable, it would be given by interest; if attendance were gratuitous, it would be rarely paid, and no man would endure the least disgust. Unanimity is impossible, and debate would separate the assembly.

But suppose the philological decree made and promulgated, what would be its authority? In absolute governments, there is sometimes a general reverence paid to all that has the sanction of power, and the countenance of greatness. How little this is the state of our country needs not to be told. We live in an age in which it is a kind of publick sport to refuse all respect that cannot be enforced. The edicts of an English academy would probably be read by many, only that they might be sure to disobey them.

That our language is in perpetual danger of corruption cannot be denied; but what prevention can be found? The present manners of the nation would deride authority, and therefore nothing is left but that every writer should criticise himself.

All hopes of new literary institutions were quickly suppressed by the contentious turbulence of King James's reign;<sup>1</sup> and Roscommon, foreseeing that some violent concussion of the State was at hand, purposed to retire to Rome, alleging, that *it was best to sit near the chimney when the chamber smoked*; a sentence, of which the application seems not very clear.

<sup>1</sup> Into which Lord Roscommon did not live. Roscommon died before the 21st of January, 1684-5, and Charles II. on the 6th February, 1684-5.—P. CUNNINGHAM.



His departure was delayed by the gout ; and he was so impatient either of hinderance or of pain, that he submitted himself to a French empirick, who is said to have repelled the disease into his bowels.

At the moment in which he expired, he uttered, with an energy of voice that expressed the most fervent devotion, two lines of his own version of *Dies Iræ* :

“ My God, my Father, and my Friend,  
Do not forsake me in my end.”

—He died in 1684 ; and was buried with great pomp in Westminster-Abbey.

His poetical character is given by Mr. Fenton :

“ In his writings,” says Fenton, “ we view the image of a mind which was naturally serious and solid ; richly furnished and adorned with all the ornaments of learning, unaffectedly disposed in the most regular and elegant order. His imagination might have probably been more fruitful and sprightly, if his judgement had been less severe. But that severity (delivered in a masculine, clear, succinct style) contributed to make him so eminent in the didactical manner, that no man, with justice, can affirm he was ever equalled by any of our nation, without confessing at the same time that he is inferior to none. In some other kinds of writing his genius seems to have wanted fire to attain the point of perfection ; but who can attain it ? ”

From this account of the riches of his mind, who would not imagine that they had been displayed in large volumes and numerous performances ? Who would not, after the perusal of this character, be surprised to find that all the proofs of this genius, and knowledge and judgement, are not sufficient to form a single book, or to appear otherwise than in conjunction with the work of some other writer of the same petty size ? But thus it is that characters are written : we know somewhat, and we imagine the rest.

The observation, that his imagination would probably have been more fruitful and spritely if his judgement had been less severe, may be answered, by a remarker somewhat inclined to cavil, by a contrary supposition, that his judgement would probably have been less severe, if his imagination had been more fruitful. It is ridiculous to oppose judgement to imagination; for it does not appear that men have necessarily less of one as they have more of the other.

We must allow of Roscommon, what Fenton has not mentioned so distinctly as he ought, and what is yet very much to his honour, that he is perhaps the only correct writer in verse before Addison; and that, if there are not so many or so great beauties in his compositions as in those of some contemporaries, there are at least fewer faults. Nor is this his highest praise; for Mr. Pope has celebrated him as the only moral writer of King Charles's reign:

"Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days,  
Roscommon only boasts unspotted lays."<sup>1</sup>

His great work is his "Essay on Translated Verse;"<sup>2</sup> of which Dryden writes thus in the preface to his *Miscellanies*:<sup>3</sup>

"It was my Lord Roscommon's 'Essay on Translated Verse,'" says Dryden, "which made me uneasy, till I tried whether or no I was capable of following his rules, and of reducing the speculation into practice. For many a fair precept in poetry is like a seeming demonstration in mathematicks, very specious in the diagram, but failing in the mechanick operation. I think I have generally observed his instructions: I am sure my reason is sufficiently con-

<sup>1</sup> First Ep. 2nd Bk. Horace. Ald. *Pope*, vol. iii. p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> First edition. Lond. Tonson, 1684.

<sup>3</sup> Preface to the second *Miscellany*, published 1685, S. S. D. vol. xii. p. 282. The first *Miscellany* had no preface.

ed both of their truth and usefulness ; which, in other  
 ls, is to confess no less a vanity than to pretend that I  
 e, at least in some places, made examples to his  
 s.”

his declaration of Dryden will, I am afraid, be found  
 e more than one of those cursory civilities which one  
 nor pays to another ; for when the sum of lord Ros-  
 mon’s precepts is collected, it will not be easy to dis-  
 er how they can qualify their reader for a better per-  
 nance of translation than might have been attained by  
 own reflections.

fe that can abstract his mind from the the elegance of  
 poetry, and confine it to the sense of the precepts, will  
 no other direction than that the author should be suit-  
 e to the translator’s genius ; that he should be such as  
 r deserve a translation ; that he who intends to translate  
 should endeavour to understand him ; that perspicuity  
 uld be studied, and unusual and uncouth names spar-  
 y inserted : and that the style of the original should be  
 ed in its elevation and depression. These are the rules  
 t are celebrated as so definite and important ; and for  
 delivery of which to mankind so much honour has been  
 l. Roscommon has indeed deserved his praises, had  
 r been given with discernment, and bestowed not on the  
 s themselves, but the art with which they are intro-  
 ed, and the decorations with which they are adorned.  
 he Essay, though generally excellent, is not without its  
 ts. The story of the Quack,<sup>1</sup> borrowed from Boileau,<sup>2</sup>  
 not worth the importation : he has confounded the  
 ish and Saxon mythology :

“ I grant that from some mossy idol oak,  
 In double rhymes, our *Thor* and *Woden* spoke.”<sup>3</sup>

*Ess. Trans. Verse*, ed. 1685, p. 16.

Boileau, *L’Art Poétique*, Chant iv. *Œuvres*, tom. ii. p. 384.

*Ess. Trans. Verse*, p. 24.



The oak, as I think Gildon<sup>1</sup> has observed, belonged to the British druids, and *Thor* and *Woden* were Saxon deities. Of the *double rhymes*, which he so liberally supposes, he certainly had no knowledge.

His interposition of a long paragraph<sup>2</sup> of blank verses is unwarrantably licentious. Latin poets might as well have introduced a series of iambicks among their heroicks.

His next work is the translation of the *Art of poetry*;<sup>3</sup> which has received, in my opinion, not less praise than he deserves. Blank verse, left merely to its numbers, has little operation either on the ear or mind: it can hardly support itself without bold figures and striking images. A poem frigidly didactick, without rhyme, is so near to prose, that the reader only scorns it for pretending to be verse.

Having disentangled himself from the difficulties of rhyme, he may justly be expected to give the sense of Horace with great exactness, and to suppress no subtilty of sentiment for the difficulty of expressing it. This demand, however, his translation will not satisfy; what he found obscure, I do not know that he has ever cleared.

Among the smaller works, the *Eclogue* of "*Virgil*" and "*Dies Iræ*" are well translated; though the best line in the "*Dies Iræ*" is borrowed from Dryden. In return, succeeding poets have borrowed from Roscommon.

In the verses on the Lap-dog, the pronouns *thou* and *you*

<sup>1</sup> *The Laws of Poetry*, &c. 1721, p. 343. Gildon also points out, p. 332, that Roscommon did not beautify but debase Boileau's fine episode. In fact, the story is transformed and its point lost.

<sup>2</sup> "An Essay on blank Verse out of the 6th Book of *Paradise Lost*." This interpolation was made by Roscommon in the 2nd edition of the 'Essay,' pp. 24-25. It is to this epitome, almost a parody or caricature, that Addison refers in *Spectator*, No. 333, as rendering unnecessary his further enumeration of the beauties of the 6th book.

<sup>3</sup> The translation of the *Art of Poetry* preceded the *Essay on Translated Verse*, being published in 1680.



re offensively confounded ; and the turn at the end is from Valler.

His versions of the two odes of Horace are made with great liberty, which is not recompensed by much elegance or vigour.

His poetical verses are spritely, and when they were written must have been very popular.

Of the scene of "Guarini," and the prologue to "Pompey," Mrs. Phillips,<sup>1</sup> in her letters<sup>2</sup> to Sir Charles Cotterel, has given the history.

"Lord Roscommon," says she,<sup>3</sup> "is certainly one of the most promising young noblemen in Ireland. He has paraphrased a Psalm admirably, and a scene of 'Pastor Fido' very finely, in some places much better than Sir Richard Fanshawe. This was undertaken merely in compliment to me, who happened to say that it was the best scene in Italian, and the worst in English. He was only two hours about it. It begins thus :

'Dear happy groves, and you the dark retreat  
Of silent horror, Rest's eternal seat.'

From these lines, which are since somewhat mended, it appears that he did not think a work of two hours fit to endure the eye of criticism without revision.

When Mrs. Phillips was in Ireland, some ladies that had seen her translation of "Pompey," resolved to bring it on the stage at Dublin ; and, to promote their design, Lord Roscommon gave them a prologue, and Sir Edward Dering

<sup>1</sup> Katharine Philips (1631-1664). In her day "The matchless Orinda" as compared to Sappho and Sulpitia, and found her admirers among the greatest poets of the age. Dr. Jeremy Taylor addressed to her his *Treasures and Offices of Friendship*, and Cowley wrote an ode upon her death.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*. Lond. 1705, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> In a letter dated Dublin, Oct. 19, 1662.

an Epilogue; "which," says she, "are the best performances of those kinds I ever saw." If this is not criticism, it is at least gratitude. The thought of bringing Cæsar and Pompey into Ireland, the only Country over which Cæsar never had any power, is lucky.

Of Roscommon's works, the judgement of the publick seems to be right. He is elegant, but not great; he never labours after exquisite beauties, and he seldom falls into gross faults. His versification is smooth, but rarely vigorous, and his rhymes are remarkably exact. He improved taste, if he did not enlarge knowledge, and may be numbered among the benefactors to English literature.

OTWAY.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2.

3. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

4.



## OTWAY.

OF Thomas Otway, one of the first names in the English drama, little is known; nor is there any part of that little which his biographer can take pleasure relating.

He was born at Trotton in Sussex, March 3, 1651, the son of Mr. Humphry Otway, rector of Woolbedding. From Winchester-school, where he was educated, he was entered <sup>1</sup> 1669 a commoner of Christ-church; but left the university without a degree, whether for want of money, or from impatience of academical restraint, or mere eagerness to mingle with the world, is not known.

It seems likely that he was in hope of being busy and conspicuous: for he went to London, and commenced lawyer; but found himself unable to gain any reputation on the stage.

This kind of inability he shared with Shakspeare and Jonson, as he shared likewise some of their excellences. It seems reasonable to expect that a great dramatick poet should without difficulty become a great actor; that he who can feel, could express; that he who can excite passion, should exhibit with great readiness its external modes: but since experience has fully proved that of those powers, whatever be their affinity, one may be possessed in a great degree by him who has very little of the other; it must be allowed that they depend upon different faculties, or on different use of the same faculty; that the actor must

<sup>1</sup> The college books give "May 27th, 1669, aged 17."

have a pliancy of mien, a flexibility of countenance, and a variety of tones, which the poet may be easily supposed to want; or that the attention of the poet and the player have been differently employed; the one has been considering thought, and the other action; one has watched the heart, and the other contemplated the face.

Though he could not gain much notice as a player, he felt in himself such powers as might qualify for a dramatic author; and in 1675, his twenty-fifth year, produced "*Alcibiades*," a tragedy; whether from the "*Alcibiade*" of Palaprat,<sup>1</sup> I have not means to enquire. Langbain, the great detector of plagiarism, is silent.

In 1677 he published "*Titus and Berenice*," translated from Rapin,<sup>2</sup> with the "*Cheats of Scapin*" from Moliere; and in 1678 "*Friendship in Fashion*," a comedy, which, whatever might be its first reception, was, upon its revival at Drury-lane in 1749, hissed off the stage for immorality and obscenity.

Want of morals, or of decency, did not in those days exclude any man from the company of the wealthy and the gay, if he brought with him any powers of entertainment; and Otway is said to have been at this time a favourite companion of the dissolute wits. But, as he who desires no virtue in his companion has no virtue in himself, those whom Otway frequented had no purpose of doing more for him than to pay his reckoning. They desired only to drink and laugh; their fondness was without benevolence, and their familiarity without friendship. Men of wit, says

<sup>1</sup> Palaprat (1650-1721). A French poet, whose works, in one volume, were published in 1711. He was afterwards associated with Bruëys, and their joint works, in five vols. 1775, brought them great repute. That Palaprat wrote no play of this name, and that the *Alcibiade* of Campistron was not brought on the French stage till December, 1685, has been observed by several commentators.

<sup>2</sup> This is probably an overlooked printer's error. Otway's *Titus and Berenice* is a free translation, with large omissions, of Racine's *Bérénice*.

one of Otway's biographers, received at that time no favour from the Great but to share their riots; from which *they were dismissed again to their own narrow circumstances. Thus they languished in poverty without the support of imminence.*<sup>1</sup>

Some exception, however, must be made. The Earl of Plymouth, one of King Charles's natural sons, procured for him a cornet's commission in some troops then sent into Flanders. But Otway did not prosper in his military character; for he soon left his commission behind him, whatever was the reason, and came back to London in extreme indigence; which Rochester mentions with merciless insolence in the "Session of the Poets:"

"Tom Otway came next, Tom Shadwell's dear zany,  
And swears for heroicks he writes best of any;  
Don Carlos his pockets so amply had fill'd,  
That his mange was quite cured, and his lice were all kill'd.  
But Apollo had seen his face on the stage,  
And prudently did not think fit to engage  
The scum of a play-house, for the prop of an age." }

"Don Carlos," from which he is represented as having received so much benefit, was played in 1675. It appears, by the Lampoon, to have had great success, and is said to have been played thirty nights together. This however it is reasonable to doubt, as so long a continuance of one play upon the stage is a very wide deviation from the practice of that time; when the ardour for theatrical entertainments was not yet diffused through the whole people, and the audience, consisting nearly of the same persons, could be drawn together only by variety.

The "Orphan" was exhibited in 1680. This is one of the few plays that keep possession of the stage, and has

<sup>1</sup> From a sketch of the life of Otway, prefixed to an early edition of his works. Dr. Johnson, in quoting this passage, has altered the sense of it, by substituting imminence for innocence. THORNTON, p. xiv.



pleased for almost a century, through all the vicissitudes of dramattick fashion. Of this play nothing new can easily be said. It is a domestick tragedy drawn from middle life. Its whole power is upon the affections; for it is not written with much comprehension of thought, or elegance of expression. But if the heart is interested, many other beauties may be wanting, yet not be missed.

The same year produced "The History and Fall of Caius Marius;" much of which is borrowed from the "Romeo and Juliet" of Shakspeare.

In 1683<sup>1</sup> was published the first, and next year the second,<sup>2</sup> parts of "The Soldier's Fortune, two comedies now forgotten; and in 1685 his last and greatest dramattick work, "Venice preserved," a tragedy, which still continues to be one of the favourites of the publick, notwithstanding the want of morality in the original design, and the despicable scenes of vile comedy with which he has diversified his tragick action. By comparing this with his "Orphan," it will appear that his images were by time become stronger, and his language more energetick. The striking passages are in every mouth; and the publick seems to judge rightly of the faults and excellences of this play, that it is the work of a man not attentive to decency, nor zealous for virtue; but of one who conceived forcibly, and drew originally, by consulting nature in his own breast.

Together with those plays he wrote the poems which are in the late collection,<sup>3</sup> and translated from the French the "History of the Triumvirate."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This should be 1681.

<sup>2</sup> The second part of the *Soldier's Fortune* was called *The Atheist*, and was published in 1684, and is therefore Otway's last work. There is a copy of *Venice Preserved* in the British Museum, dated 1682.

<sup>3</sup> Known as Johnson's *British Poets*, 1781. *vid. sup.* p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Published after his death, 8vo, 1686. The French original was *Histoire des deux Triumvirats*, par Citri De la Guette, 1681.



All this was performed before he was thirty-four years old; for he died<sup>1</sup> April 14, 1685, in a manner which I am unwilling to mention. Having been compelled by his necessities to contract debts, and hunted, as is supposed, by the terriers of the law, he retired to a publick house on Tower-hill, where he is said to have died of want; or, as it is related by one of his biographers, by swallowing, after a long fast, a piece of bread which charity had supplied. He went out, as is reported, almost naked, in the rage of hunger, and finding a gentleman in a neighbouring coffee-house, asked him for a shilling. The gentleman gave him a guinea; and Otway going away bought a roll, and was choaked with the first mouthful. All this, I hope, is not true; and there is this ground of better hope, that Pope who lived near enough to be well informed, relates in Spence's memorials,<sup>2</sup> that he died of a fever caught by violent pursuit of a thief that had robbed one of his friends. But that indigence, and its concomitants, sorrow and despondency, pressed hard upon him, has never been denied, whatever immediate cause might bring him to the grave.<sup>3</sup>

Of the poems<sup>4</sup> which the late collection admits, the longest is the "Poet's Complaint of his Muse," part of which I do not understand; and in that which is less obscure I find little to commend. The language is often gross, and the numbers are harsh. Otway had not much cultivated versification, nor much replenished his mind with general knowledge. His principal power was in moving

<sup>1</sup> Otway was buried on the 16th April, 1685, in the churchyard of St. Clement Danes. "His person was of the middle size, about 5 feet 7 in. in height, inclinable to fatness. He had a thoughtful, speaking eye, and that was all." W. G. in *Gent. Mag.* for 1745, p. 99.

P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> Spence, ed. *Singer*, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph was first added by Johnson in this edition (1783).

<sup>4</sup> The best edition is that by Thornton. London, 1813. 8vo. 3 vols.

the passions,<sup>1</sup> to which Dryden<sup>2</sup> in his latter years left an illustrious testimony. He appears, by some of his verses, to have been a zealous royalist: and had what was in those times the common reward of loyalty; he lived and died neglected.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Walter Scott thought that "More tears have been shed, probably, for the sorrows of Belvidera and Ronimia than for those of Juliet and Desdemona." *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. vi. p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> In his preface to Fresnoy's *Art of Painting* (Lintot, 1750, p. xlviii).

WALLER.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

Of the many editions of Waller's Poems, the first genuine appeared in 1645. The best is Fenton's, published by Tonson, with the addition of the Prose Works in 1739. 4to. "A very splendid edition." *vid. infr. Life of Fenton.*

The edition referred to in the notes as '*Works*' is Fenton's, as published by Tonson, 1730. 12mo.

See criticism on Waller, by E. Gosse, in Ward's *Select English Poets*, p. 270, where also is a small selection of his poems.



## WALLER.

MUND WALLER<sup>1</sup> was born on the third of March, 1605, at Colshill in Hertfordshire. His father Robert Waller, Esquire, of Agmondesham in Buckinghamshire, whose family was originally a branch of the Wallers; and his mother was the daughter of John Hampden, of Hampden in the same county, and John Hampden, the zealot of rebellion.<sup>2</sup>

His father died while he was yet an infant, but left him a yearly income of three thousand five hundred pounds; estimating together the value of money and the customs we may reckon more than equivalent to ten thousand of present time.

He was educated, by the care of his mother, at Eaton; removed afterwards to King's College in Cambridge.<sup>3</sup> He was sent to parliament in his eighteenth, if not in his nineteenth year, and frequented the court of James the First, where he heard a very remarkable conversation, the writer of the *Life* prefixed to his Works,<sup>4</sup> who must have been well informed of facts, though he may have been various readings in the *Life of Waller*, see Boswell's *Johnson*, p. 5-6.

Waller's brother William married Elizabeth Cromwell, aunt of Oliver Cromwell, and was the father of John Hampden, so that Waller and John Hampden were first cousins. See *Life of Waller*, by Rev. J. Gilfillan, 1857, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1857.

Waller matriculated fellow commoner of King's, 21st June, 1621. See *Life of Waller*, &c. The 8th edition to which is prefixed the Author's *Life* (said to be by Atterbury), London. Tonson, 1711. p. viii.

sometimes err in chronology, has delivered as indubitably certain.

"He found Dr. Andrews, bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Neale, bishop of Durham, standing behind his Majesty's chair; and there happened something extraordinary," continues this writer, "in the conversation those prelates had with the king, on which Mr. Waller did often reflect. His Majesty asked the bishops, 'My Lords, cannot I take my subjects money, when I want it, without all this formality of parliament?'" The bishop of Durham readily answered, 'God forbid, Sir, but you should: you are the breath of our nostrils.' Whereupon the King turned and said to the bishop of Winchester, "Well, my Lord, what say you?" 'Sir,' replied the bishop, 'I have no skill to judge of parliamentary cases.' The King answered, "No put-offs, my Lord; answer me presently." 'Then, Sir,' said he, 'I think it is lawful for you to take my brother Neale's money; for he offers it.' Mr. Waller said, the company was pleased with this answer, and the wit of it seemed to affect the King; for, a certain lord coming in soon after, his Majesty cried out, "Oh, my lord, they say you lig with my Lady." 'No, Sir,' says his Lordship in confusion; 'but I like her company, because she has so much wit.' "Why then," says the King, "do you not lig with my Lord of Winchester there?"

Waller's political<sup>1</sup> and poetical life began nearly together. In his eighteenth year he wrote the poem that appears first in his works, on "the Prince's Escape"<sup>2</sup> at St.

<sup>1</sup> Waller obtained a seat in the House of Commons for Aymesham in the 3rd parliament of James I. when he was only sixteen years of age. "I was but sixteen when I sate first," said Waller himself in a debate reported in Grey's *Debates*, p. 355, but according to Clarendon, Waller was not known as a poet till he was thirty years of age. Clarendon's *Life*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> From shipwreck, on his return from Spain, where he had been "soliciting a marriage with the Infanta of Spain," the 5th October, 1623.

Andero;" a piece which justifies the observation made by one of his editors, that he attained, by a felicity like instinct, a style which perhaps will never be obsolete; and that, "were we to judge only by the wording, we could not know what was wrote at twenty, and what at fourscore." His versification was, in his first essay, such as it appears in his last performance. By the perusal of Fairfax's translation of Tasso, to which, as Dryden<sup>1</sup> relates, he confessed himself indebted for the smoothness of his numbers, and by his own nicety of observation, he had already formed such a system of metrical harmony as he never afterwards much needed, or much endeavoured, to improve. Denham corrected his numbers by experience, and gained ground gradually upon the ruggedness of his age; but what was acquired by Denham, was inherited by Waller.

The next poem,<sup>2</sup> of which the subject seems to fix the time, is supposed by Mr. Fenton to be the Address to the Queen, which he considers as congratulating her arrival, in Waller's twentieth year. He is apparently mistaken; for the mention of the nation's obligations to her frequent pregnancy, proves that it was written when she had brought many children. We have therefore no date of any other poetical production before that which the murder of the Duke of Buckingham<sup>3</sup> occasioned: the steadiness with which the King received the news in the chapel, deserved indeed to be rescued from oblivion.

Neither of these pieces that seem to carry their own dates, could have been the sudden effusion of fancy. In the verses on the Prince's escape, the prediction of his

<sup>1</sup> In the Preface to his *Fables*.

<sup>2</sup> There are two poems, one *To the Queen, occasioned by the sight of her Majesty's Picture*, p. 13, and a much later one, *Of the Queen*, p. 15, which contains the allusion to which Johnson refers.

<sup>3</sup> August, 1628.



marriage with the princess of France, must have been written after the event; in the other, the promises of the King's kindness to the descendants of Buckingham, which could not be properly praised till it had appeared by its effects, shew that time was taken for revision and improvement. It is not known that they were published till they appeared long afterwards with other poems.<sup>1</sup>

Waller was not one of those idolaters of praise who cultivate their minds at the expence of their fortunes. Rich as he was by inheritance, he took care early to grow richer by marrying Mrs. Banks,<sup>2</sup> a great heiress in the city, whom the interest of the court was employed to obtain for Mr. Crofts. Having brought him a son, who died young, and a daughter, who was afterwards married to Mr. Dormer,<sup>3</sup> of Oxfordshire, she died in child-bed, and left him a widower of about five and twenty, gay and wealthy, to please himself with another marriage.

Being too young to resist beauty, and probably too vain to think himself resistible, he fixed his heart, perhaps half fondly and half ambitiously, upon the Lady Dorothea Sidney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, whom he courted by all the poetry in which Sacharissa is celebrated; the name is derived from the Latin appellation of *sugar*, and implies, if it means any thing, a spiritless mildness, and dull good-nature, such as excites rather tenderness than esteem, and such as, though always treated with kindness, is never honoured or admired.

<sup>1</sup> The earliest volume of verse published by Waller is his *Poems*, 12mo, 1645. His first printed poem is *Upon Ben Jonson*, part of the *Jonsonus Viribius*, 4to. 1638. P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cunningham states that this marriage took place at St. Margaret's, Westminster, July 15th, 1631.

<sup>3</sup> Of Rousham, where is still to be seen a very fine portrait of Waller; the grounds of Rousham were laid out by Pope. P. CUNNINGHAM.



Yet he describes Sacharissa as a sublime predominating beauty, of lofty charms, and imperious influence, on whom he looks with amazement rather than fondness, whose chains he wishes, though in vain, to break, and whose presence is *wine that inflames to madness*.<sup>1</sup>

His acquaintance with this high-born dame gave wit no opportunity of boasting its influence; she was not to be subdued by the powers of verse, but rejected his addresses, it is said, with disdain, and drove him away to solace his disappointment with Amoret or Phillis. She married in 1639 the Earl of Sunderland, who died at Newberry in the king's cause; and, in her old age, meeting somewhere with Waller, asked him, when he would again write such verses upon her; "When you are as young, Madam," said he, "and as handsome, as you were then."<sup>2</sup>

In this part of his life it was that he was known to Clarendon, among the rest of the men who were eminent in that age for genius and literature; but known so little to his advantage, that they who read his character<sup>3</sup> will not much condemn Sacharissa, that she did not descend from her rank to his embraces, nor think every excellence comprised in wit.

The Lady was, indeed, inexorable; but his uncommon qualifications, though they had no power upon her, recommended him to the scholars and statesmen; and undoubtedly many beauties of that time, however they might receive his love, were proud of his praises. Who they were, whom he dignifies with poetical names, cannot now be known. Amoret, according to Mr. Fenton, was the Lady Sophia Murray.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps by traditions preserved in families more may be discovered.

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, p. 45.      <sup>2</sup> *Life of Waller*, prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xvii.

<sup>3</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. pp. 58-79.

<sup>4</sup> *Observations on some of Mr. Waller's Poems*, by Mr. Fenton, p. lxxii.

From the verses written at Penshurst,<sup>1</sup> it has been collected that he diverted his disappointment by a voyage; and his biographers, from his poem on the Whales,<sup>2</sup> think it not improbable that he visited the Bermudas; but it seems much more likely that he should amuse himself with forming an imaginary scene, than that so important an incident, as a visit to America, should have been left floating in conjectural probability.

From his twenty-eighth to his thirty-fifth year, he wrote his pieces on the Reduction of Salée; on the Reparation of St. Paul's; to the King on his Navy; the panegyrick on the Queen Mother; the two poems to the Earl of Northumberland; and perhaps others, of which the time cannot be discovered.

When he had lost all hopes of Sacharissa, he looked round him for an easier conquest, and gained a Lady of the family of Bresse, or Breaux. The time of his marriage is not exactly known. It has not been discovered that this wife was won by his poetry; nor is any thing told of her, but that she brought him many children. He doubtless praised some whom he would have been afraid to marry; and perhaps married one whom he would have been ashamed to praise. Many qualities contribute to domestic happiness, upon which poetry has no colours to bestow; and many airs and sallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve. There are charms made only for distant admiration. No spectacle is nobler than a blaze.

Of this wife, his biographers have recorded that she gave him five sons and eight daughters.

During the long interval of parliament, he is represented as living among those with whom it was most honourable to converse, and enjoying an exuberant fortune with that independence and liberty of speech and conduct which

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, pp. 33, 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 55.

wealth ought always to produce. He was however considered as the kinsman of Hampden, and was therefore supposed by the courtiers not to favour them.

When the parliament was called in 1640, it appeared that Waller's political character had not been mistaken. The King's demand of a supply produced one of those noisy speeches which disaffection and discontent regularly dictate; a speech filled with hyperbolical complaints of imaginary grievances. "They," says he,<sup>1</sup> "who think themselves already undone can never apprehend themselves in danger, and they who have nothing left can never give freely." Political truth is equally in danger from the praises of courtiers, and the exclamations of patriots.

He then proceeds to rail at the clergy, being sure at that time of a favourable audience. His topick is such as will always serve its purpose; an accusation of acting and preaching only for preferment: and he exhorts the Commons *carefully to provide for their protection against Pulpit Law.*<sup>2</sup>

It always gratifies curiosity to trace a sentiment. Waller has in this speech quoted Hooker in one passage; and in another has copied him, without quoting. "Religion," says Waller, "ought to be the first thing in our purpose and desires; but that which is first in dignity is not always to precede in order of time; for well-being supposes a being; and the first impediment which men naturally endeavour to remove, is the want of those things without which they cannot subsist. God first assigned unto Adam maintenance of life, and gave him a title to the rest of the creatures before he appointed a law to observe."<sup>3</sup>

"God first assigned Adam," says Hooker, "maintenance of life, and then appointed him a law to observe.—True it

<sup>1</sup> Speech to the House of Commons, April 22nd, 1640. *Works*, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 263.



is, that the kingdom of God must be the first thing in purpose and desires; but inasmuch as a righteous presupposeth life, inasmuch as to live virtuously it is possible, except we live; therefore the first impediment which naturally we endeavour to remove is penury, want of things without which we cannot live."<sup>1</sup>

The speech is vehement; but the great position, grievances ought to be redressed before supplies granted, is agreeable enough to law and reason: nor Waller, if his biographer<sup>2</sup> may be credited, such an enemy to the King, as not to wish his distresses lightened; for he relates, "that the King sent particularly to Waller second his demand of some subsidies to pay off the army, and Sir Henry Vane objecting against first voting a supply because the King would not accept unless it came up to the proportions, Mr. Waller spoke earnestly to Sir Thomas Jermyn, comptroller of the household, to save his master from the effects of so bold a falsity; 'for, he said, I am a country gentleman, and cannot pretend to know the King's mind:' but Sir Thomas durst not contradict the secretary; and his son, the Earl of St. Albans, afterwards told Mr. Waller, that his father's cowardice ruined the King."

In the Long Parliament, which, unhappily for the nation, met Nov. 3, 1640, Waller represented Agmondesham for the third time; and was considered by the discontented party as a man sufficiently trusty and acrimonious to be employed in managing the prosecution of Judge Crawley,

<sup>1</sup> Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. i. section x. p. 2. Works of Hooker, 1841, vol. i. p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, ed. 1711, p. xx.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Crawley was made Justice of the Common Pleas in 1633. His judgment in the Ship money Case declared that it was a royal prerogative to impose taxes without the consent of parliament. Waller's speech, July 6th, 1641, at a conference of both Houses, maintaining the impeachment of Judge Crawley (Works, p. 267) was highly applauded.



his opinion in favour of ship-money ; and his speech shews that he did not disappoint their expectations. He was probably the more ardent, as his uncle Hampden<sup>1</sup> had been particularly engaged in the dispute, and by a sentence which seems generally to be thought unconstitutional particularly injured.

He was not however a bigot to his party, nor adopted all their opinions. When the great question, whether Episcopacy ought to be abolished, was debated, he spoke against the innovation so coolly, so reasonably, and so firmly, that it is not without great injury to his name that his speech, which was as follows, has been hitherto omitted in his works :

\* " There is no doubt but the sense of what this nation hath suffered from the present Bishops, hath produced these complaints ; and the apprehensions men have of suffering the like, in time to come, make so many desire the taking away of Episcopacy : but I conceive it is possible that we may not, now, take a right measure of the minds of the people by their petitions ; for, when they subscribed them, the Bishops were armed with a dangerous commission of making new canons, imposing new oaths, and the like ; but now we have disarmed them of that power. These petitioners, lately, did look upon Episcopacy as a beast armed with horns and claws ; but now that we have cut and pared them, (and may, if we see cause, yet reduce it into narrower bounds) it may, perhaps, be more agreeable. Howsoever, if they be still in passion, it be-

\* This speech has been retrieved, from a paper printed at that time, by the writers of the *Parliamentary History*.—JOHNSON.<sup>2</sup>

"Twenty thousand of 'em sold in one day." *Life* prefixed to *Poems*,  
xxi.

<sup>1</sup> Waller was first cousin to John Hampden, and his uncle Hampden had married an aunt of Oliver Cromwell.

<sup>2</sup> Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, vol. ii. p. 826.

comes us soberly to consider the right use and antiquity thereof; and not to comply further with a general desire, than may stand with a general good.

“We have already shewed, that episcopacy, and the evils thereof, are mingled like water, and oil; we have also, in part, severed them; but I believe you will find, that our laws and the present government of the church are mingled like wine and water; so inseparable, that the abrogation of, at least, a hundred of our laws is desired in these petitions. I have often heard a noble answer of the Lords, commended in this house, to a proposition of like nature, but of less consequence; they gave no other reason of their refusal but this, *Nolumus mutare Leges Angliæ*: it was the bishops who so answered then; and it would become the dignity and wisdom of this house to answer the people, now, with a *Nolumus mutare*.

“I see some are moved with a number of hands against the Bishops; which, I confess, rather inclines me to their defence: for I look upon episcopacy as a counterscarp, or out-work; which, if it be taken by this assault of the people, and, withall, this mystery once revealed, *That we must deny them nothing when they ask it thus in troops*, we may, in the next place, have as hard a task to defend our property, as we have lately had to recover it from the Prerogative. If, by multiplying hands and petitions, they prevail for an equality in things ecclesiastical, the next demand perhaps may be *Lex Agraria*, the like equality in things temporal.

“The Roman story tells us, That when the people began to flock about the senate, and were more curious to direct and know what was done, than to obey, that Commonwealth soon came to ruin: their *Legem rogare* grew quickly to be a *Legem ferre*; and after, when their legions had found that they could make a Dictator, they never suffered the senate to have a voice any more in such election.

" If these great innovations proceed, I shall expect a flat and level in learning too, as well as in church-preferments: *Honos alit Artes*. And though it be true, that grave and pious men do study for learning-sake, and embrace virtue for itself; yet it is true, that youth, which is the season when learning is gotten, is not without ambition; nor will ever take pains to excell in any thing, when there is not some hope of excelling others in reward and dignity.

" There are two reasons chiefly alleged against our church-government.

" First, Scripture, which, as some men think, points out another form.

" Second, The abuses of the present superiors.

" For Scripture, I will not dispute it in this place; but I am confident that, whenever an equal division of lands and goods shall be desired, there will be as many places in Scripture found out, which seem to favour that, as there are now alleged against the prelacy or preferment in the church. And, as for abuses, where you are now, in the Remonstrance, told, what this and that poor man hath suffered by the bishops, you may be presented with a thousand instances of poor men that have received hard measure from their landlords; and of worldly goods abused, to the injury of others, and disadvantage of the owners.

" And therefore, Mr. Speaker, my humble motion is, That we may settle men's minds herein; and, by a question, declare our resolution, *to reform*, that is *not to abolish, Episcopacy*."

It cannot but be wished that he, who could speak in this manner, had been able to act with spirit and uniformity.

When the Commons began to set the royal authority at open defiance, Waller is said to have withdrawn from the house, and to have returned with the king's permission; and, when the king set up his standard, he sent him a



thousand broad-pieces.<sup>1</sup> He continued, however, to sit in the rebellious conventicle; but "spoke," says Clarendon, "with great sharpness and freedom, which, now there was no danger of being outvoted, was not restrained; and therefore used as an argument against those who were gone upon pretence that they were not suffered to deliver their opinion freely in the house, which could not be believed, when all men knew what liberty Mr. Waller took, and spoke every day with impunity against the sense and proceedings of the house."<sup>2</sup>

Waller, as he continued to sit, was one of the commissioners nominated by the parliament to treat with the king at Oxford; and when they were presented, the King said to him, "Though you are the last, you are not the lowest nor the least in my favour."<sup>3</sup> Whitlock, who, being another of the commissioners, was witness of this kindness, imputes it to the king's knowledge of the plot, in which Waller appeared afterwards to have been engaged against the parliament. Fenton, with equal probability, believes that his attempt to promote the royal cause arose from his sensibility of the king's tenderness. Whitlock says nothing of his behaviour at Oxford: he was sent with several others to add pomp to the commission, but was not one of those to whom the trust of treating was imparted.

The engagement, known by the name of Waller's plot, was soon afterwards discovered. Waller had a brother-in-law, Tomkyns, who was clerk of the Queen's council, and at the same time had a very numerous acquaintance, and great influence, in the city. Waller and he, conversing with great confidence, told both their own secrets and those of their friends; and, surveying the wide extent of

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xxii.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. of the Rebellion*, ed. 1826, vol. iv. p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Whitlocke's *Memorials*, pp. 67, 70, ed. 1732.



their conversation, imagined that they found in the majority of all ranks great disapprobation of the violence of the Commons, and unwillingness to continue the war. They knew that many favoured the king, whose fear concealed their loyalty; and many desired peace, though they durst not oppose the clamour for war; and they imagined that if those who had these good intentions could be informed of their own strength, and enabled by intelligence to act together, they might overpower the fury of sedition, by refusing to comply with the ordinance for the twentieth part, and the other taxes levied for the support of the rebel army, and by uniting great numbers in a petition for peace. They proceeded with great caution. Three only met in one place, and no man was allowed to impart the plot to more than two others, so that if any should be suspected or seized, more than three could not be endangered.

Lord Conway joined in the design, and, Clarendon imagines,<sup>1</sup> incidentally mingled, as he was a soldier, some martial hopes or projects, which however were only mentioned, the main design being to bring the loyal inhabitants to the knowledge of each other; for which purpose there was to be appointed one in every district, to distinguish the friends of the king, the adherents to the parliament, and the neutrals. How far they proceeded does not appear; the result of their enquiry, as Pym declared,\* was, that within the walls for one that was for the Royalists, there were three against them; but that without

\* *Parliamentary History*, vol. xii.—JOHNSON.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. pp. 60, 61.

<sup>2</sup> This is from Pym's *Narrative of Waller's Plot*, as he delivered it at the Guildhall on the 8th June, 1643, being the orator chosen to speak for the deputation sent by the Commons. Pym died in December of the same year. *Parliamentary History*, vol. iii. p. 125.

the walls for one that was against them, there were five for them. Whether this was said from knowledge or guess, was perhaps never enquired.

It is the opinion of Clarendon,<sup>1</sup> that in Waller's plan no violence or sanguinary resistance was comprised; that he intended only to abate the confidence of the rebels by publick declarations, and to weaken their powers by an opposition to new supplies. This, in calmer times, and more than this, is done without fear; but such was the acrimony of the commens, that no method of obstructing them was safe.

About this time another design was formed by Sir Nicholas Crispe, a man of loyalty that deserves perpetual remembrance; when he was a merchant in the city, he gave and procured the king, in his exigences, an hundred thousand pounds; and, when he was driven from the Exchange, raised a regiment, and commanded it.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Nicholas flattered himself with an opinion, that some provocation would so much exasperate, or some opportunity so much encourage, the King's friends in the city, that they would break out in open resistance, and then would want only a lawful standard, and an authorised commander; and extorted from the King, whose judgment too frequently yielded to importunity, a commission of array, directed to such as he thought proper to nominate, which was sent to London by the Lady Aubigny.<sup>3</sup> She knew not what she carried, but was to deliver it on the

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> He survived the Restoration, and dying 26th Feb. 1665, was buried in Hammersmith Church in which he had ordered to be erected a bronze bust of Charles I. "as a grateful commemoration of that glorious martyr." The bust is still in the church.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Howard, then the widow of Lord Aubigny, who fell at Edge Hill. She was imprisoned for her share in Waller's plot; escaped to the Hague, married the Earl of Newburgh, and died abroad in 1649.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

communication of a certain token which Sir Nicholas imparted.

This commission could be only intended to lie ready till the time should require it. To have attempted to raise any forces, would have been certain destruction; it could be of use only when the forces should appear. This was, however, an act preparatory to martial hostility. Crispe would undoubtedly have put an end to the session of parliament, had his strength been equal to his zeal; and out of the design of Crispe, which involved very little danger, and that of Waller, which was an act purely civil, they compounded a horrid and dreadful plot.

The discovery of Waller's design is variously related. In Clarendon's "History" it is told,<sup>1</sup> that a servant of Tomkyns, lurking behind the hangings when his master was in conference with Waller, heard enough to qualify him for an informer, and carried his intelligence to Pym. A manuscript, quoted in the "Life of Waller,"<sup>2</sup> relates, that "he was betrayed by his sister Price, and her presbyterian chaplain Mr. Goode, who stole some of his papers; and if he had not strangely dreamed the night before, that his sister had betrayed him, and thereupon burnt the rest of his papers by the fire that was in his chimney, he had certainly lost his life by it." The question cannot be decided. It is not unreasonable to believe that the men in power, receiving intelligence from the sister, would employ the servant of Tomkyns to listen at the conference, that they might avoid an act so offensive as that of destroying the brother by the sister's testimony.

The plot was published in the most terriffick manner. On the 31st of May (1643), at a solemn fast, when they were listening to the sermon, a messenger entered the

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xxviii.



church,<sup>1</sup> and communicated his errand to Pym, who whispered it to others that were placed near him, and then went with them out of the church, leaving the rest in solicitude and amazement. They immediately sent guards to proper places, and that night apprehended Tomkyns and Waller; having yet traced nothing but that letters had been intercepted, from which it appeared that the parliament and the city were soon to be delivered into the hands of the cavaliers.

They perhaps yet knew little themselves, beyond some general and indistinct notices. "But Waller," says Clarendon, "was so confounded with fear, that he confessed whatever he had heard, said, thought, or seen; all that he knew of himself, and all that he suspected of others, without concealing any person, of what degree or quality soever, or any discourse which he had ever upon any occasion entertained with them; what such and such ladies of great honour, to whom, upon the credit of his wit and great reputation, he had been admitted, had spoke to him in their chambers upon the proceedings in the Houses, and how they encouraged him to oppose them; what correspondence and intercourse they had with some Ministers of State at Oxford, and how they had conveyed all intelligence thither."<sup>2</sup> He accused the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway as co-operating in the transaction; and testified that the Earl of Northumberland had declared himself disposed in favour of any attempt that might check the violence of the Parliament, and reconcile them to the King.

He undoubtedly confessed much, which they could never have discovered, and perhaps somewhat which they would wish to have been suppressed; for it is inconvenient, in the

<sup>1</sup> St. Margaret's, Westminster.

<sup>2</sup> Clarendon's *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 67, ed. 1826.



conflict of factions, to have that disaffection known which cannot safely be punished.

Tomkyns was seized on the same night with Waller, and appears likewise to have partaken of his cowardice; for he gave notice of Crispe's commission of array, of which Clarendon never knew how it was discovered. Tomkyns had been sent with the token appointed, to demand it from Lady Aubigny, and had buried it in his garden, where, by his direction, it was dug up; and thus the rebels obtained, what Clarendon confesses them to have had, the original copy.

It can raise no wonder that they formed one plot out of these two designs, however remote from each other, when they saw the same agent employed in both, and found the commission of array in the hands of him who was employed in collecting the opinions and affections of the people.

Of the plot, thus combined, they took care to make the most. They sent Pym among the citizens, to tell them of their imminent danger, and happy escape; and inform them, that the design was to seize the "Lord Mayor and all the Committee of Militia, and would not spare one of them." They drew up a vow and covenant, to be taken by every member of either house, by which he declared his detestation of all conspiracies against the parliament, and his resolution to detect and oppose them. They then appointed a day of thanksgiving for this wonderful delivery; which shut out, says Clarendon,<sup>1</sup> all doubts whether there had been such a deliverance, and whether the plot was real or fictitious.

On June 11, the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway were committed, one to the custody of the mayor, and the other of the sheriff; but their lands and goods were not seized.

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 70.

Waller was still to immerse himself deeper in ignominy. The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway denied the charge, and there was no evidence against them but the confession of Waller, of which undoubtedly many would be inclined to question the veracity. With these doubts he was so much terrified, that he endeavoured to persuade Portland to a declaration like his own, by a letter extant in Fenton's edition.<sup>1</sup> "But for me," says he, "you had never known any thing of this business, which was prepared for another; and therefore I cannot imagine why you should hide it so far as to contract your own ruin by concealing it, and persisting unreasonably to hide that truth, which, without you, already is, and will every day be made more, manifest. Can you imagine yourself bound in honour to keep that secret, which is already revealed by another; or possible it should still be a secret, which is known to one of the other sex?—If you persist to be cruel to yourself for their sakes who deserve it not, it will nevertheless be made appear, ere long, I fear, to your ruin. Surely, if I had the happiness to wait on you, I could move you to compassionate both yourself and me, who, desperate as my case is, am desirous to die with the honour of being known to have declared the truth. You have no reason to contend to hide what is already revealed—inconsiderately to throw away yourself, for the interest of others, to whom you are less obliged than you are aware of."

This persuasion seems to have had little effect. Portland sent (June 29) a letter to the Lords, to tell them, that he "is in custody, as he conceives, without any charge; and that, by what Mr. Waller hath threatened him with since he was imprisoned, he doth apprehend a very cruel, long, and ruinous restraint:—He therefore prays, that he may not find the effects of Mr. Waller's threats, by a long

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, p. 280.

and close imprisonment; but may be speedily brought to a legal trial, and then he is confident the vanity and falsehood of those informations which have been given against him will appear."

In consequence of this letter, the Lords ordered Portland and Waller to be confronted; when the one repeated his charge, and the other his denial. The examination of the plot being continued (July 1), Thinn, usher of the house of Lords, deposed, that Mr. Waller having had a conference with the Lord Portland in an upper room, Lord Portland said, when he came down, "Do me the favour to tell my Lord Northumberland, that Mr. Waller has extremely pressed me to save my own life and his, by throwing the blame upon the Lord Conway and the Earl of Northumberland."

Waller, in his letter to Portland, tells him of the reasons which he could urge with resistless efficacy in a personal conference; but he over-rated his own oratory; his vehemence, whether of persuasion or intreaty, was returned with contempt.

One of his arguments with Portland is, that the plot is already known to a woman. This woman was doubtless Lady Aubigny, who, upon this occasion, was committed to custody; but who, in reality, when she delivered the commission, knew not what it was.

The parliament then proceeded against the conspirators, and committed their trial to a council of war. Tomkyns and Chaloner were hanged near their own doors. Tomkyns, when he came to die, said it was a *foolish business*; and indeed there seems to have been no hope that it should escape discovery; for though never more than three met at a time, yet a design so extensive must, by necessity, be communicated to many, who could not be expected to be all faithful, and all prudent. Chaloner was attended at his execution by Hugh Peters. His crime was that he had



commission to raise money for the King; but, it appears not that the money was to be expended upon the advancement of either Crispe or Waller's plot.

The Earl of Northumberland, being too great for prosecution, was only once examined before the Lords. The Earl of Portland and lord Conway persisting to deny the charge, and no testimony but Waller's yet appearing against them, were, after a long imprisonment, admitted to bail. Hassel, the King's messenger, who carried the letters to Oxford, died the night before his trial. Hampden<sup>1</sup> escaped death, perhaps by the interest of his family; but was kept in prison to the end of his life. They whose names were inserted in the commission of array were not capitally punished, as it could not be proved that they had consented to their own nomination; but they were considered as malignants, and their estates were seized.

"Waller, though confessedly," says Clarendon,<sup>2</sup> "the most guilty, with incredible dissimulation affected such a remorse of conscience, that his trial was put off, out of Christian compassion, till he might recover his understanding." What use he made of this interval, with what liberality and success he distributed flattery and money, and how, when he was brought (July 4) before the House, he confessed and lamented, and submitted and implored, may be read in the "History of the Rebellion," (B. vii.). The speech, to which Clarendon ascribes the preservation of his *dear-bought life*, is inserted in his works. The great historian, however, seems to have been mistaken<sup>3</sup> in relating that *he prevailed* in the principal part of his supplication, *not to be tried by a Council of War*; for, according to Whitlock,<sup>4</sup> he was by expulsion from the House aban-

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Hampden, a kinsman of John Hampden.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> Clarendon, *Hist. Rebellion*, vol. iv. p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> Whitlocke, p. 70, ed. 1732.



doned to the tribunal which he so much dreaded, and, being tried and condemned, was reprieved by Essex; but after a year's imprisonment, in which time resentment grew less acrimonious, paying a fine of ten thousand pounds, he was permitted to *recollect himself in another country*.<sup>1</sup>

Of his behaviour<sup>2</sup> in this part of his life, it is not necessary to direct the reader's opinion. "Let us not," says his last ingenious biographer,<sup>3</sup> "condemn him with untempered severity, because he was not a prodigy which the world hath seldom seen, because his character included not the poet, the orator, and the hero."

For the place of his exile he chose France, and staid some time at Roan,<sup>4</sup> where his daughter Margaret was born, who was afterwards his favourite, and his amanuensis. He then removed to Paris, where he lived with great splendor and hospitality; and from time to time amused himself with poetry, in which he sometimes speaks of the rebels, and their usurpation, in the natural language of an honest man.

At last it became necessary, for his support, to sell his wife's jewels; and being reduced, as he said, at last to the *rump jewel*, he solicited from Cromwell permission to return, and obtained it by the interest of colonel Scroop, to whom his sister was married. Upon the remains of a fortune, which the danger of his life had very much diminished, he lived at Hall-barn, a house built by him-

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's *Hist. Rebell.* vol. iv. p. 79, ed. 1826.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, p. 146, 5th ed. Bohn, speaks thus plainly, "Waller, for being more a knave than the rest, and impeaching his complices, was permitted to buy his life for £10,000." See also Waller's Letter to Arthur Goodwyn, given in Nugent's *Memorials of Hampden*, vol. ii. p. 419. Lond. 1832.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Waller*, by Percival Stockdale, prefixed to his Works. Lond. 1772, p. lxiii.

<sup>4</sup> Rouen.

self, very near to Beaconsfield,<sup>1</sup> where his mother resided. His mother, though related to Cromwell and Hampden, was zealous for the royal cause, and, when Cromwell visited her, used to reproach him; he, in return, would throw a napkin at her, and say he would not dispute with his aunt; but finding in time that she acted for the king, as well as talked, he made her a prisoner to her own daughter, in her own house. If he would do any thing, he could not do less.

Cromwell, now protector, received Waller, as his kinsman, to familiar conversation. Waller, as he used to relate, found him sufficiently versed in ancient history; and when any of his enthusiastick friends came to advise or consult him, could sometimes overhear him discoursing in the cant of the times: but, when he returned, he would say, "Cousin Waller, I must talk to these men in their own way:" and resumed the common style of conversation.<sup>2</sup>

He repaid the Protector for his favours (1654) by the famous panegyrick,<sup>3</sup> which has been always considered as the first of his poetical productions. His choice of encomiastick topicks is very judicious; for he considers Cromwell in his exaltation, without enquiring how he attained it; there is consequently no mention of the rebel or the regicide. All the former part of his hero's life is veiled with shades; and nothing is brought to view but the chief, the governor, the defender of England's honour, and the

<sup>1</sup> The manor of Beaconsfield, which had previously appertained to Burnham Abbey, belonged to Waller's family. He himself died at Hall-barn and his widow continued to live there till her death in 1708. The part of the property called "Gregories" had been sold previously, and was bought eventually by Burke, whose genial hospitality long made that house, rebuilt and adorned, the resort of persons of distinction, both English and foreign. See *Life of Edmund Burke*, by Peter Burke, 1853, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, p. 113. Mr. Cunningham observes that Waller did not include this poem in any edition of his poems.

enlarger of her dominion. The act of violence by which she obtained the supreme power is lightly treated, and recently justified. It was certainly to be desired that the detestable band should be dissolved, which had destroyed the church, murdered the King, and filled the nation with tumult and oppression; yet Cromwell had not the right of dissolving them, for all that he had before done could be justified only by supposing them invested with lawful authority. But combinations of wickedness would overwhelm the world by the advantage which licentious principles afford, did not those who have long practised perfidy, grow faithless to each other.

In the poem on the war with Spain<sup>1</sup> are some passages at least equal to the best parts of the panegyrick; and in the conclusion, the poet ventures yet a higher flight of flattery, by recommending royalty to Cromwell and the nation. Cromwell was very desirous, as appears from his conversation, related by Whitlock,<sup>2</sup> of adding the title to the power of monarchy, and is supposed to have been withheld from it partly by fear of the army, and partly by fear of the laws, which, when he should govern by the name of King, would have restrained his authority. When therefore a deputation was solemnly sent to invite him to the Crown, he, after a long conference, refused it; but is said to have fainted in his coach, when he parted from them.

The poem on the death of the Protector<sup>3</sup> seems to have been dictated by real veneration for his memory. Dryden and Sprat wrote on the same occasion;<sup>4</sup> but they were young men, struggling into notice, and hoping for some favour from the ruling party. Waller had little to

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Whitlock gives a long conversation with Cromwell to this effect. *Memorials*, pp. 548-551. Lond. 1732.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> These three poems were published together. Lond. 1659. 4to.



but I have found no extracts that can be more quoted as exhibiting sallies of gaiety than cogency of argument.<sup>1</sup>

He was of such consideration, that his remarks were circulated and recorded. When the duke of York's influence was high, both in Scotland and England, it drew, says Burnet, a lively reflection from Waller the celebrated wit. "He said, the house of commons had resolved that the duke should not reign after the king's death; but the king, in opposition to them, had resolved that he should reign even in his life."<sup>2</sup> If there appear no extraordinary *liveliness* in this remark, yet its reception proves the speaker to have been a *celebrated wit*, to have had a name which the men of wit were proud of mentioning.

He did not suffer his reputation to die gradually away, which may easily happen in a long life, but renewed his claim to poetical distinction from time to time, as occasions were offered, either by publick events or private incidents; and, contenting himself with the influence of his muse, or loving quiet better than influence, he never accepted any office of magistracy.

He was not, however, without some attention to his fortune; for he asked from the King (in 1665) the provostship of Eaton College, and obtained it; but Clarendon refused to put the seal to the grant, alleging that it could be held only by a clergyman. It is known that Sir Henry Wotton qualified himself for it by Deacon's orders.

To this opposition, the "*Biographia*"<sup>3</sup> imputes the

<sup>1</sup> But Waller asked some searching questions of the House. On April 15th, 1641, he went to the root of the matter, by enquiring, "what were the fundamental laws of England?" *Gardiner, Hist. Engl.* vol. ix. p. 336; and on Nov. 6th, 1641, he characterized Pym's *Additional Instruction* as a "declaration that the House was absolved from its duty as Strafford had declared the King absolved from all rules of government." *Ibid.* vol. x. p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Burnet's *Hist. Own Time*, vol. ii. p. 416, ed. 1823.

<sup>3</sup> *Biographia Britannica*, vol. vi. p. 411. 1766.



the first parliament summoned by Charles the Second (1661), Waller sat for Hastings in Sussex, and for different places in all the parliaments of that

In a time when fancy and gaiety were the most useful recommendations to regard, it is not likely that he was forgotten. He passed his time in the company of the highest, both in rank and wit, from which even the most obstinate sobriety did not exclude him. Though he was a water, he was enabled by his fertility of mind to turn the mirth of Bacchanalian assemblies; and Mr. Waller said, that "no man in England should keep him any without drinking but Ned Waller."<sup>1</sup>

The praise given him by St. Evremond<sup>2</sup> is a proof of his reputation; for it was only by his reputation that he became known, as a writer, to a man who, though he lived a great part of a long life upon an English pension, yet condescended to understand the language of the nation that maintained him.

In the parliament, "he was," says Burnet,<sup>3</sup> "the delight of the house, and though old said the liveliest things of any age then." This, however, is said in his account of the year seventy-five, when Waller was only seventy. His reputation as a speaker occurs often in Grey's "Collections;"<sup>4</sup>

life prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xlvii.

Charles de St. Evremond (1613-1703), a French scholar and soldier. Returned from France in 1670, he was invited to England by Charles II. He gave him a pension of £300 a year. His fame, during a long life, as a brilliant star in the polished aristocracy of France and England, was for a time," says Hallam, "a lustre to his writings, the general character of which is most trifling, though he sometimes rises to literary greatness." His works were collected after his death. His chief merit is in style and manner. See Pope's character of him, Spence, *Anec.* ed. 1757, p. 134.

*1st. Own Time*, vol. ii. p. 81.

*Debates of the House of Commons, from 1667 to 1694*, by Anchtell, 10 vols. 1763.

wall ; and wrote a "Presage of the Downfall of the Turkish Empire," which he presented to the King on his birthday. It is remarked, by his commentator Fenton, that in reading Tasso he had early imbibed a veneration for the heroes of the Holy War, and a zealous enmity to the Turks, which never left him. James, however, having soon after begun what he thought a holy war at home, made haste to put all molestation of the Turks out of his power.

James treated him with kindness and familiarity, of which instances are given by the writer of his "Life." One day, taking him into the closet, the King asked him how he liked one of the pictures : "My eyes," said Waller, "are dim, and I do not know it." The king said, it was the princess of Orange. "She is," said Waller, "like the greatest woman in the world." The King asked who was that? and was answered, Queen Elizabeth. "I wonder," said the King, "you should think so ; but I must confess she had a wise council." "And, Sir," said Waller, "did you ever know a fool chuse a wise one?" Such is the story,<sup>1</sup> which I once heard of some other man. Pointed axioms, and acute replies, fly loose about the world, and are assigned successively to those whom it may be the fashion to celebrate.

When the King knew that he was about to marry his daughter to Dr. Birch,<sup>2</sup> a clergyman, he ordered a French gentleman to tell him, that "the King wondered he could think of marrying his daughter to a falling church." "The King," says Waller, "does me great honour, in taking notice of my domestick affairs ; but I have lived long enough to observe that this falling church has got a trick of rising again."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, pp. li. lii.

<sup>2</sup> Birch, Peter, D.D. born 1652, of Ch. Ch. Oxford, Prebendary of Westminster, author of some political sermons.

<sup>3</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, p. lii.

He took notice to his friends of the King's conduct ; and said, that " he would be left like a whale upon the strand." Whether he was privy to any of the transactions which ended in the Revolution, is not known. His heir joined the prince of Orange.

Having now attained an age beyond which the laws of nature seldom suffer life to be extended, otherwise than by a future state, he seems to have turned his mind upon preparation for the decisive hour, and therefore consecrated his poetry to devotion. It is pleasing to discover that his piety was without weakness ; that his intellectual powers continued vigorous ; and that the lines which he composed when *he, for age, could neither read nor write*, are not inferior to the effusions of his youth.

Towards the decline of life, he bought a small house, with a little land, at Colshill ; and said, " he should be glad to die, like the stag, where he was roused." <sup>1</sup> This, however, did not happen. When he was at Beaconsfield, he found his legs grow tumid : he went to Windsor, where Sir Charles Scarborough then attended the King, and requested him, as both a friend and physician, to tell him, *what that swelling meant*. " Sir," answered Scarborough, " your blood will run no longer." Waller repeated some lines of Virgil, and went home to die. <sup>2</sup>

As the disease increased upon him, he composed himself for his departure ; and calling upon Dr. Birch to give him the holy sacrament, he desired his children to take it with him, and made an earnest declaration of his faith in Christianity. It now appeared, what part of his conversation with the great could be remembered with delight. He related, that being present when the duke of Buckingham talked profanely before King Charles, he said to him, " My Lord, I am a great deal older than your grace, and have, I believe, heard more arguments for atheism than

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. lvii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. lvi.



ever your grace did; but I have lived long enough to see there is nothing in them; and so, I hope, your grace will.”<sup>1</sup>

He died October 21, 1687, and was buried at Beaconsfield, with a monument erected by his son's executors, for which Rymer wrote the inscription, and which I hope is now rescued from dilapidation.

He left several children by his second wife; of whom, his daughter was married to Dr. Birch. Benjamin, the eldest son, was disinherited, and sent to New Jersey, as wanting common understanding. Edmund, the second son, inherited the estate, and represented Agmondesham in parliament, but at last turned Quaker. William, the third son, was a merchant in London. Stephen, the fourth, was an eminent Doctor of Laws, and one of the Commissioners for the Union. There is said to have been a fifth, of whom no account has descended.<sup>2</sup>

The character of Waller, both moral and intellectual, has been drawn by Clarendon, to whom he was familiarly known, with nicety, which certainly none to whom he was not known can presume to emulate. It is therefore inserted here, with such remarks as others have supplied; after which, nothing remains but a critical examination of his poetry.

“Edmund Waller,” says Clarendon, “was born to a very fair estate, by the parsimony, or frugality, of a wise father and mother; and he thought it so commendable an advantage, that he resolved to improve it with his utmost care, upon which in his nature he was too much intent; and, in order to that, he was so much reserved and retired, that he was scarce ever heard of, till by his address and dexterity he had gotten a very rich wife in the city, against

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. lvii.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson and Boswell found a great grandson of Waller at Aberdeen. *Boswell's Johnson*, vol. v. p. 63.



all the recommendation and countenance and authority of the Court, which was thoroughly engaged on the behalf of Mr. Crofts ; and which used to be successful in that age, against any opposition. He had the good fortune to have an alliance and friendship with Dr. Morley, who had assisted and instructed him in the reading many good books, to which his natural parts and promptitude inclined him, especially the poets ; and at the age when other men used to give over writing verses (for he was near thirty years when he first engaged himself in that exercise ; at least, that he was known to do so), he surprised the town with two or three pieces of that kind ; as if a tenth Muse had been newly born, to cherish drooping poetry. The Doctor at that time brought him into that company, which was most celebrated for good conversation ; where he was received and esteemed, with great applause and respect. He was a very pleasant discourser, in earnest and in jest, and therefore very grateful to all kind of company, where he was not the less esteemed for being very rich.

“He had been even nursed in parliaments, where he sat when he was very young ; and so, when they were resumed again (after a long intermission), he appeared in those assemblies with great advantage ; having a graceful way of speaking, and, by thinking much on several arguments (which his temper and complexion, that had much of melancholic, inclined him to), he seemed often to speak upon the sudden, when the occasion had only administered the opportunity of saying what he had thoroughly considered, which gave a great lustre to all he said ; which yet was rather of delight than weight. There needs no more be said to extol the excellence and power of his wit, and pleasantness of his conversation, than that it was of magnitude enough to cover a world of very great faults ; that is, so to cover them, that they were not taken notice of

to his reproach; viz. a narrowness in his nature to the lowest degree; an abjectness and want of courage to support him in any virtuous undertaking; an insinuation and servile flattery to the height, the vainest and most imperious nature could be contented with; that it preserved and won his life from those who were most resolved to take it, and in an occasion in which he ought to have been ambitious to have lost it; and then preserved him again, from the reproach and contempt that was due to him, for so preserving it, and for vindicating it at such a price; that it had power to reconcile him to those, whom he had most offended and provoked; and continued to his age with that rare felicity, that his company was acceptable, where his spirit was odious; and he was at least pitied, where he most detested."<sup>1</sup>

Such is the account of Clarendon; on which it may not be improper to make some remarks.

"He was very little known till he had obtained a rich wife in the city."

He obtained a rich wife about the age of three-and-twenty; an age before which few men are conspicuous much to their advantage. He was known, however, in parliament and at court: and, if he spent part of his time in privacy, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he endeavoured the improvement of his mind as well as of his fortune.

That Clarendon might misjudge the motive of his retirement is the more probable, because he has evidently mistaken the commencement of his poetry, which he supposes him not to have attempted before thirty. As his first pieces were perhaps not printed, the succession of his compositions was not known; and Clarendon, who cannot be imagined to have been very studious of poetry, did not rectify his first opinion by consulting Waller's book.

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's *Life*, vol. i. p. 53, ed. 1827.

arendon observes, that he was introduced to the wits of age by Dr. Morley; <sup>1</sup> but the writer of his *Life* <sup>2</sup> relates he was already among them, when, hearing a noise in street, and enquiring the cause, they found a son of Ben on under an arrest. This was Morley, whom Waller ree at the expence of one hundred pounds, took him the country as director of his studies, and then ured him admission into the company of the friends of ature. Of this fact, Clarendon had a nearer knowledge the biographer, and is therefore more to be credited. he account of Waller's parliamentary eloquence is nded by Burnet, who, though he calls him "the delight he house," adds, that "he was only concerned to say , which should make him be applauded, he never laid business of the House to heart, being a vain and empty gh a witty man." <sup>3</sup>

f his insinuation and flattery it is not unreasonable to eve that the truth is told. Ascham, in his elegant rscription of those whom in modern language we term s, says, that they are *open flatterers, and privy mockers*. ler shewed a little of both, when, upon sight of Dutchess of Newcastle's verses on the death of a Stag, declared that he would give all his own compositions to e written them; and, being charged with the exorbit- e of his adulation, answered, that "nothing was too h to be given, that a Lady might be saved from the race of such a vile performance." <sup>4</sup> This, however, was very mischievous or very unusual deviation from truth; his hypocrisy been confined to such transactions, might have been forgiven, though not praised; for who ears to flatter an author or a lady?

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's *Life*, vol. i. p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xi.

<sup>3</sup> Burnet's *Hist. Own Time*, vol. ii. p. 81, ed. 1823.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*, p. 206, ed. 1705.



Of the laxity of his political principles, and the weakness of his resolution, he experienced the natural effect, by losing the esteem of every party. From Cromwell he had only his recall; and from Charles the Second, who delighted in his company, he obtained only the pardon of his relation Hampden, and the safety of Hampden's son.

As far as conjecture can be made from the whole of his writing, and his conduct, he was habitually and deliberately a friend to monarchy. His deviation towards democracy proceeded from his connection with Hampden, for whose sake he prosecuted Crawley with great bitterness: and the invective which he pronounced on that occasion was so popular, that twenty thousand copies are said by his biographer to have been sold in one day.

It is confessed that his faults still left him many friends, at least many companions. His convivial power of pleasing is universally acknowledged; but those who conversed with him intimately, found him not only passionate, especially in his old age, but resentful; so that the interposition of friends was sometimes necessary.

His wit and his poetry naturally connected him with the polite writers of his time: he was joined with Lord Buckhurst in the translation of Corneille's *Pompey*; and is said to have added his help to that of Cowley in the original draught of the *Rehearsal*.<sup>1</sup>

The care of his fortune, which Clarendon imputes to him in a degree little less than criminal, was either not constant or not successful; for, having inherited a patrimony of three thousand five hundred a year in the time of James the First, and augmented it at least by one wealthy marriage, he left, about the time of the Revolution, an income of not more than twelve or thirteen hundred; which, when the different value of money is reckoned, will be found

<sup>1</sup> *Life* prefixed to *Poems*, 1711, p. xlvii.



perhaps not more than a fourth part of what he once possessed.

Of this diminution part was the consequence of the fine which he was forced to scatter, and the fine which he was condemned to pay at the detection of his plot: and in his state, as is related in his *Life*, was sequestered, he had probably contracted debts when he lived in exile: for we are told that at Paris he lived in splendor, and was the only Englishman, except the Lord St. Albans, that kept a table.

His unlucky plot compelled him to sell a thousand a year; of the waste of the rest there is no account, except that he is confessed by his biographer to have been a bad economist. He seems to have deviated from the common practice; to have been a hoarder in his first years, and a squanderer in his last.

Of his course of studies, or choice of books, nothing is known more than that he professed himself unable to read Chapman's translation of Homer without rapture. His opinion concerning the duty of a poet is contained in his declaration,<sup>2</sup> that "he would blot from his works any line that did not contain some motive to virtue."<sup>1</sup>

The characters, by which Waller intended to distinguish his writings, are spriteliness and dignity; in his smaller pieces, he endeavours to be gay; in the larger, to be great.

<sup>1</sup> Pope acknowledges "that a free daring spirit animates this translation, which is something like what one might imagine Homer himself could have written before he arrived at years of discretion." *Warton*, *id.* iv. p. 269, and Keats's grand sonnet (No. XI. p. 40, *Palgrave's Keats*) on first looking into Chapman's *Homer*, is too well known to need repetition.

<sup>2</sup> Fenton's *Observations* at the end of Waller's *Poems*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell thinks that in this *Life* Johnson "satisfies his readers how ably he might have executed a *Tory History* of his country." Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 5.

Of his airy and light productions, the chief source is gallantry, that attentive reverence of female excellence, which has descended to us from the Gothic ages. As his poems are commonly occasional, and his addresses personal, he was not so liberally supplied with grand as with soft images; for beauty is more easily found than magnanimity.

The delicacy, which he cultivated, restrains him to a certain nicety and caution, even when he writes upon the slightest matter. He has therefore in his whole volume nothing burlesque, and seldom any thing ludicrous or familiar. He seems always to do his best; though his subjects are often unworthy of his care. It is not easy to think without some contempt on an author, who is growing illustrious in his own opinion by verses, at one time, "To a Lady, who can do any thing, but sleep, when she pleases." At another, "To a Lady, who can sleep, when she pleases." Now, "To a Lady, on her passing through a crowd of people." Then, "On a braid of divers colours woven by four fair Ladies:" "On a tree cut in paper:" or, "To a Lady, from whom he received the copy of verses on the paper-tree, which for many years had been missing."

Genius now and then produces a lucky trifle. We still read the "Dove" of Anacreon, and "Sparrow" of Catullus; and a writer naturally pleases himself with a performance, which owes nothing to the subject. But compositions merely pretty have the fate of other pretty things, and are quitted in time for something useful: they are flowers fragrant and fair, but of short duration; or they are blossoms to be valued only as they foretell fruits.

Among Waller's little poems are some, which their excellency ought to secure from oblivion; as, "To Amoret,"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fenton's edition, 1730, p. 44.

comparing the different modes of regard with which he looks on her and *Sacharissa*; and the verses "On Love," that begin, *Anger in hasty words or blows*.<sup>1</sup>

In others he is not equally successful; sometimes his thoughts are deficient, and sometimes his expression.

The numbers are not always musical; as,

"Fair Venus, in thy soft arms  
The god of rage confine;  
For thy whispers are the charms  
Which only can divert his fierce design.  
What though he frown, and to tumult do incline;  
Thou the flame  
Kindled in his breast canst tame,  
With that snow which unmelted lies on thine."<sup>2</sup>

He seldom indeed fetches an amorous sentiment from the depths of science; his thoughts are for the most part easily understood, and his images such as the superficialities of nature readily supplies; he has a just claim to popularity, because he writes to common degrees of knowledge, and is free at least from philosophical pedantry, unless perhaps the end of a song "To the Sun" may be excepted, in which he is too much a Copernican. To which may be added, the simile of the "Palm" in the verses "On her passing through a crowd;" and a line in a more serious poem on the "Restoration," about vipers and treacle, which can only be understood by those who happen to know the composition of the "Theriaca."<sup>3</sup>

His thoughts are sometimes hyperbolical, and his images unnatural:

"——The plants admire,  
No less than those of old did Orpheus' lyre;  
If she sit down, with tops all tow'rd's her bow'd;  
They round about her into arbours crowd:

<sup>1</sup> P. 60.

<sup>2</sup> P. 19.

<sup>3</sup> This Greek poem by Nicander (B. C. *circa*. 185-135), first published 1499, treats of venomous animals and the wounds inflicted by them.

Or if she walks, in even ranks they stand,  
Like some well-marsh'd and obsequious band."<sup>1</sup>

In [an] other place:

- While in the park I sing, the listening deer  
Attend my passion, and forget to fear:  
When to the breeches I report my flame,  
They bow their heads, as if they felt the same:  
To gods appealing, when I reach their bowers,  
With loud complaints they answer me in showers.  
To thee a wild and cruel soul is given,  
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heaven!"<sup>2</sup>

On the head of a Stag:<sup>3</sup>

- O fertile head! which every year  
Could such a crop of wonder bear!  
The teeming earth did never bring  
So soon, so hard, so huge a thing:  
Which might it never have been cast,  
Each year's growth added to the last.  
These lofty branches had supply'd  
The Earth's bold son's prodigious pride:  
Heaven with these engines had been scald,  
When mountains heap'd on mountains fail'd."

Sometimes, having succeeded in the first part, he makes a feeble conclusion. In the song of "Sacharissa's and Amoret's Friendship," the two last stanzas ought to have been omitted.

His images of gallantry are not always in the highest degree delicate.

"Then shall my love this doubt displace,  
And gain such trust, that I may come  
And banquet sometimes on thy face,  
But make my constant meals at home."

Some applications may be thought too remote and un-consequential: as in the verses on the "Lady dancing:"

- The sun in figures such as these,  
Joys with the moon to play:

<sup>1</sup> P. 33.

<sup>2</sup> P. 42.

<sup>3</sup> P. 84.

<sup>4</sup> P. 66.



To the sweet strains they advance,  
Which do result from their own spheres;  
As this nymph's dance  
Moves with the numbers which she hears."<sup>1</sup>

sometimes a thought, which might perhaps fill a dis-  
t, is expanded and attenuated till it grows weak and  
most evanescent.

"Chloris! since first our calm of peace  
Was frighted hence, this good we find,  
Your favours with your fears increase,  
And growing mischiefs make you kind.  
So the fair tree, which still preserves  
Her fruit, and state, while no wind blows,  
In storms from that uprightness swerves;  
And the glad earth about her strows  
With treasure from her yielding boughs."<sup>2</sup>

His images are not always distinct; as, in the following  
usage, he confounds *Love* as a person with *love* as a passion:

"Some other nymphs, with colours faint,  
And pencil slow, may Cupid paint,  
And a weak heart in time destroy;  
She has a stamp, and prints the Boy:  
Can, with a single look, inflame  
The coldest breast, the rudest tame."<sup>3</sup>

His sallies of casual flattery are sometimes elegant and  
ppy, as that *in return for the Silver Pen*; and some-  
times empty and trifling, as that *upon the Card torn by the*  
*een*. There are a few lines *written in the Dutchess's*  
*esso*, which he is said by Fenton to have kept a summer  
der correction. It happened to Waller, as to others,  
at his success was not always in proportion to his labour.  
Of these petty compositions, neither the beauties nor  
faults deserve much attention. The amorous verses  
re this to recommend them, that they are less hyper-  
ical than those of some other poets. Waller is not

<sup>1</sup> P. 76.<sup>2</sup> P. 79.<sup>3</sup> P. 80.

always at the last gasp; he does not die of a frown, nor live upon a smile. There is however too much love, and too many trifles. Little things are made too important; and the Empire of Beauty is represented as exerting its influence further than can be allowed by the multiplicity of human passions, and the variety of human wants. Such books therefore may be considered as shewing the world under a false appearance, and, so far as they obtain credit from the young and unexperienced, as misleading expectation, and misguiding practice.

Of his nobler and more weighty performances, the greater part is panegyrical; for of praise he was very lavish, as is observed by his imitator, Lord Lansdown:

“ No satyr stalks within the hallow'd ground,  
But queens and heroines, kings and gods abound; }  
Glory and arms and love are all the sound.”<sup>1</sup>

In the first poem, on the danger of the Prince on the coast of Spain, there is a puerile and ridiculous mention of Arion at the beginning; and the last paragraph, on the *Cable*, is in part ridiculously mean, and in part ridiculously tumid. The poem, however, is such as may be justly praised, without much allowance for the state of our poetry and language at that time.

The two next poems are upon the King's *behaviour at the death of Buckingham*, and upon his *Navy*.

He has, in the first, used the pagan deities with great propriety<sup>2</sup>:

“ 'Twas want of such a precedent as this  
Made the old heathen frame their gods amiss.”

In the poem on the Navy, those lines are very noble,

<sup>1</sup> “ No satyr lurks within this hallow'd ground,  
But nymphs and heroines, kings and gods abound;  
Glory, and arms, and Love, is all the sound.”

Lord Lansdowne, *To the immortal memory of Mr. Edmund Waller*,  
*Works*, 1736, vol. i. p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> P. 7.

which suppose the King's power secure against a second deluge; so noble, that it were almost criminal to remark the mistake of *centre* for *surface*, or to say that the empire of the sea would be worth little if it were not that the waters terminate in land.

The poem upon Salle<sup>1</sup> has forcible sentiments; but the conclusion is feeble. That on the Repairs of St. Paul's has something vulgar and obvious; such as the mention of Amphion; and something violent and harsh, as

“So all our minds with his conspire to grace  
The Gentiles' great apostle, and deface  
Those state-obscuring sheds, that like a chain  
Seem'd to confine, and fetter him again:  
Which the glad saint shakes off at his command,  
As once the viper from his sacred hand.  
So joys the aged oak, when we divide  
The creeping ivy from his injur'd side.”<sup>2</sup>

Of the two last couplets, the first is extravagant, and the second mean.

His praise of the Queen is too much exaggerated; and the thought, that she “saves lovers, by cutting off hope, as gangrenes are cured by lopping the limb,” presents nothing to the mind but disgust and horror.

Of the “Battle of the Summer Islands,”<sup>3</sup> it seems not easy to say whether it is intended to raise terror or merriment. The beginning is too splendid for jest, and the conclusion too light for seriousness. The versification is studied, the scenes are diligently displayed, and the images artfully amplified; but as it ends neither in joy nor sorrow, it will scarcely be read a second time.

The “Panegyrick” upon Cromwell<sup>4</sup> has obtained from the publick a very liberal dividend of praise, which however cannot be said to have been unjustly lavished; for such a series of verses had rarely appeared before in the

<sup>1</sup> P. 9.<sup>2</sup> P. 11.<sup>3</sup> P. 52.<sup>4</sup> P. 113.



English language. Of the lines some are grand, some are graceful, and all are musical. There is now and then a feeble verse, or a trifling thought; but its great fault is the choice of its hero.

The poem of "The War with Spain"<sup>1</sup> begins with lines more vigorous and striking than Waller is accustomed to produce. The succeeding parts are variegated with better passages and worse. There is something too far-fetched in the comparison of the Spaniards drawing the English on, by saluting St. Lucar with cannon, *to lambs awakening the lion by bleating*. The fate of the Marquis and his Lady, who were burnt in their ship, would have moved more, had the poet not made him die like the Phoenix, because he had spices about him, nor expressed their affection and their end by a conceit at once false and vulgar:

"Alive, in equal flames of love they burn'd,  
And now together are to ashes turn'd."<sup>2</sup>

The verses to Charles<sup>3</sup> on his Return, were doubtless intended to counterbalance the panegyric on Cromwell. If it has been thought inferior to that with which it is naturally compared, the cause of its deficiency has been already remarked.

The remaining pieces it is not necessary to examine singly. They must be supposed to have faults and beauties of the same kind with the rest. The Sacred Poems, however, deserve particular regard; they were the work of Waller's declining life, of those hours in which he looked upon the fame and the folly of the time past with the sentiments which his great predecessor Petrarch bequeathed to posterity,<sup>4</sup> upon his review of that love and poetry which have given him immortality.

<sup>1</sup> P. 121.

<sup>2</sup> P. 123.

<sup>3</sup> P. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Sonnet I. Johnson probably had in his mind an edition of the *Sonnets and Odes of Petrarch*, Italian on one page, English on the other,



that natural jealousy which makes every man unwilling to allow much excellence in another, always produces a disposition to believe that the mind grows old with the body; that he, whom we are now forced to confess superior, is fastening daily to a level with ourselves. By delighting to sink this of the living, we learn to think it of the dead; Fenton, with all his kindness for Waller, has the luck to mark the exact time when his genius passed the zenith, when he places it at his fifty-fifth year. This is to allot the mind but a small portion. Intellectual decay is doubtless uncommon; but it seems not to be universal.<sup>1</sup> Newton, in his eighty-fifth year improving his *Chronology*, a few days before his death; and Waller appears not, in my opinion, to have lost at eighty-two any part of his poetical power.

published anonymously in 1777, just at the time when the scheme for the *Biography of the Poets* was first proposed to him. The conclusion of the English version of Sonnet I. runs thus:—

“ Oft on my cheek the conscious crimson glows,  
And sad reflection tells—ungrateful thought!—  
How jeering crowds have mocked my love-lorn woes;  
But folly’s fruits are penitence, and shame;  
With this just maxim, I’ve too dearly bought,  
That man’s applause is but a transient dream.”

Johnson himself was sixty-eight when he began to write the *Lives of the Poets*, and as Longfellow sang in *Morituri Salutamus*:

“ Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles  
Wrote his grand *Œdipus*, and Simonides  
Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers  
When each had numbered more than four-score years;  
And Theophrastes at four-score and ten  
Had but begun his *Characters of Men*.  
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,  
At sixty wrote his *Canterbury Tales*;  
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,  
Completed *Faust* when eighty years were past.”

what feats might we not record of the grand old men of our day!

His Sacred Poems do not please like some of his other works; but before the fatal fifty-five, had he written on the same subjects, his success would hardly have been better.

It has been the frequent lamentation of good men, that verse has been too little applied to the purposes of worship, and many attempts have been made to animate devotion by pious poetry; that they have very seldom attained their end is sufficiently known, and it may not be improper to enquire why they have miscarried.

Let no pious ear be offended if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defended in a didactic poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verse, will not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and the grandeur of Nature, the flowers of the spring, and the harvests of Autumn, the vicissitudes of the Tide, and the revolutions of the Sky, and praise the Maker for his works in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God.

Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to explore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topicks of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but, few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression.

Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford. This effect proceeds

in the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those which repel the imagination : but religion must be shewn as it is ; suppression and addition usually corrupt it ; and such as it is, it is known already.

From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and elevation of his fancy ; but this is rarely to be copied by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted ; infinity cannot be amplified ; Perfection cannot be improved.

The employments of pious meditation are Faith, Thanksgiving, Repentance, and Supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few odes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, emblematic in the presence of the judge, is not at leisure for adjectives and epithets. Supplication of man to man may diffuse itself through many topicks of persuasion ; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself. All that serious verse can do is to help the memory, and delight the ear, and for these purposes it may be very useful ; but it supplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Christian theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestick for ornament ; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the derelict hemisphere.

As much of Waller's reputation was owing to the softness and smoothness of his Numbers ; it is proper to consider those minute particulars to which a versifier must attend.



He certainly very much excelled in smoothness most of the writers who were living when his poetry commenced. The Poets of Elizabeth had attained an art of modulation, which was afterwards neglected or forgotten. Fairfax was acknowledged by him as his model; and he might have studied with advantage the poem of Davis,<sup>1</sup> which, though merely philosophical, yet seldom leaves the ear ungratified.

But he was rather smooth than strong; of *the full resounding line*,<sup>2</sup> which Pope attributes to Dryden, he has given very few examples. The critical decision has given the praise of strength to Denham, and of sweetness to Waller.

His excellence of versification has some abatements. He uses the expletive *do* very frequently; and though he used<sup>3</sup> to see it almost universally ejected, was not more careful to avoid it in his last compositions than in his first. Praise had given him confidence; and finding the world satisfied, he satisfied himself.

His rhymes are sometimes weak words: *so* is found to make the rhyme twice in ten lines, and occurs often as a rhyme through his book.

His double rhymes, in heroick verse, have been censured by Mrs. Phillips, who was his rival in the translation of Corneille's "Pompey;" and more faults might be found, were not the enquiry below attention.

He sometimes uses the obsolete termination of verbs, as

<sup>1</sup> *Nosce Teipsum, or Poem on the Soul of Man*, by Sir John Davies, 1599. Professor Masson says, this "is, in fact, a treatise on Psychology in the interest of the Intuitional or Transcendental Philosophy as opposed to the Empirical, and there is not a finer metrical treatise of the sort in the language, or one in which metrical exposition comes closer to the borders of real poetry." *M. M.* vol. i. p. 485.

<sup>2</sup> "The varying verse, the full resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine;"

Ald. *Pope*, vol. iii. p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> *misprint for lived!*



*paxeth, affecteth*; and sometimes retains the final syllable of the preterite, as *amazed, supposed*; of which I know not whether it is not to the detriment of our language that we have totally rejected them.

Of triplets he is sparing; but he did not wholly forbear them: of an Alexandrine he has given no example.

The general character of his poetry<sup>1</sup> is elegance and gaiety. He is never pathetick, and very rarely sublime. He seems neither to have had a mind much elevated by nature, nor amplified by learning. His thoughts are such as a liberal conversation and large acquaintance with life would easily supply. They had however then, perhaps, that grace of novelty, which they are now often supposed to want by those who, having already found them in later books, do not know or enquire who produced them first. This treatment is unjust. Let not the original author lose by his imitators.

Praise however should be due before it is given. The author of Waller's "Life" ascribes to him the first practice, of what Erythræus<sup>2</sup> and some late critics call *Alliteration*, of using in the same verse many words beginning with the same letter. But this knack, whatever be its value, was so frequent among early writers, that Gascoigne,<sup>3</sup> a writer of the sixteenth century, warns the young poet against affecting it; Shakspeare in the "Midsummer Night's Dream" is supposed to ridicule it; and in another play the sonnet of Holofernes fully displays it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. iii. pp. 461-462.

<sup>2</sup> Rossi, the author of the *Pinacotheca virorum illustrium*, was known by the name of *Erythræus*. Hallam describes him as a profuse and indiscriminating panegyrist of his contemporaries.

<sup>3</sup> He advises him not to hunt a letter to death. Gascoigne's *Certayne Notes of Instruction*, 1575.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>4</sup> *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act IV. Scene 2. "The preyful princess pierced and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket," &c. Globe edition, *Shakspeare*, p. 145.

He borrows too many of his sentiments and illustrations from the old Mythology, for which it is vain to plead the example of ancient poets: the deities which they introduced so frequently, were considered as realities, so far as to be received by the imagination, whatever sober reason might even then determine. But of these images time has tarnished the splendor. A fiction, not only detected but despised, can never afford a solid basis to any position, though sometimes it may furnish a transient allusion, or slight illustration. No modern monarch can be much exalted by hearing that, as Hercules had his *club*, he has his *navy*.

But of the praise of Waller, though much may be taken away, much will remain; for it cannot be denied that he added something to our elegance of diction, and something to our propriety of thought; and to him may be applied what Tasso said, with equal spirit and justice of himself and Guarini, when, having perused the "*Pastor Fido*," he cried out, "If he had not read '*Aminta*,' he had not excelled it."

As Waller professed himself to have learned the art of versification from Fairfax,<sup>1</sup> it has been thought proper to subjoin a specimen of his work, which, after Mr. Hoole's translation,<sup>2</sup> will perhaps not be soon reprinted. By knowing the state in which Waller found our poetry, the reader may judge how much he improved it.

<sup>1</sup> *Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recouerie of Jerusalem*. Done into English Heroicall Verse, by Edw. Fairefax, Gent. 1600. fol. Campbell has called this "one of the glories of Elizabeth's reign." The first English version of Tasso's *Jerusalem* was made by Carew in 1594. See Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. ii. p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> *Jerusalem Delivered, an Heroic Poem*: translated from the Italian of *Torg. Tasso*, by John Hoole. Lond. 1762. The dedication to Queen Charlotte was written by Johnson.

## 1.

“ Erminiaes steed (this while) his mistresse bore  
Through forrests thicke among the shadie treene,  
Her feeble hand the bridle raines forlore,  
Halfe in a swoune she was, for feare I weene ;  
But her flit courser spared nere the more,  
To beare her through the desert woods unseene  
Of her strong foes, that chas'd her through the plaine,  
And still pursu'd, but still pursu'd in vaine.

## 2.

“ Like as the wearie hounds at last retire,  
Windlesse, displeased, from the fruitlesse chace,  
When the slie beast Tapisht in bush and brire,  
No art nor paines can rowse out of his place :  
The Christian knights so full of shame and ire  
Returned backe, with faint and wearie pace !  
Yet still the fearefull Dame fled, swift as winde,  
Nor euer staid, nor euer lookt behinde.

## 3.

“ Through thicke and thinne, all night, all day, she driued,  
Withouten comfort, companie or guide,  
Her plaints and teares with euery thought reuiued,  
She heard and saw her greefes, but nought beside.  
But when the sunne his burning chariot diued  
In Thetis waue, and wearie teame vntide,  
On Iordans sandie banks her course she staid,  
At last, there downe she light, and downe she laid.

## 4.

“ Her teares, her drinke ; her food, her sorrowings,  
This was her diet that vnhappy night :  
But sleepe (that sweet repose and quiet brings)  
To ease the greefes of discontented wight,  
Spred foorth his tender, soft, and nimble wings,  
In his dull armes foulding the virgin bright ;  
And loue, his mother, and the graces kept  
Strong watch and warde, while this faire Ladie slept.



## 5.

"The birds awakte her with their morning song,  
 Their warbling musicke pearst her tender eare,  
 The murmuring brookes and whistling windes among  
 The ratling boughes, and leaues, their parts did beare;  
 Her eies vnclos'd beheld the groues along  
 Of swaines and shepherd groomes, that dwellings weare;  
 And that sweet noise, birds, winds, and waters sent,  
 Prouokte againe the virgin to lament.

## 6.

"Her plaints were interrupted with a sound,  
 That seem'd from thickest bushes to proceed,  
 Some iolly shepherd sung a lustie round,  
 And to his voice had tun'd his oaten reed;  
 Thither she went, an old man there she found,  
 (At whose right hand his little flock did feed)  
 Sat making baskets, his three sonnes among,  
 That learn'd their fathers art, and learn'd his song.

## 7.

"Beholding one in shining armes appeare  
 The seelie man and his were sore dismaid;  
 But sweet Erminia comforted their feare,  
 Her ventall vp, her visage open laid,  
 You happie folke, of heau'n beloued deare,  
 Work on (quoth she) vpon your harmlesse traid,  
 These dreadfull armes I beare no warfare bring  
 To your sweet toile, nor those sweet tunes you sing.

## 8.

"But father, since this land, these townes and towres,  
 Destroyed are with sword, with fire and spoile,  
 How may it be unhurt, that you and yours  
 In safetie thus, applie your harmlesse toile?  
 My sonne (quoth he) this pore estate of ours  
 Is euer safe from storme of warlike broile;  
 This wilderness doth vs in safetie keepe,  
 No thundring drum, no trumpet breakes our sleepe.



## 9.

“ Haply iust heau'ns defence and shield of right,  
Doth loue the innocence of simple swains,  
The thunderbolts on highest mountains light,  
And seld or neuer strike the lower plaines :  
So kings haue cause to feare *Bellonaes* might,  
Not they whose sweat and toile their dinner gaines,  
Nor ever greedie soldier was entised  
By pouertie, neglected and despised.

## 10.

“ O pouertie, chefe of the heau'nly brood,  
Dearer to me than wealth or kingly crowne !  
No wish for honour, thirst of others good,  
Can moue my hart, contented with mine owne :  
We quench or thirst with water of this flood,  
Nor fear we poison should therein be throwne :  
These little flocks of sheepe and tender goates  
Giue milke for food, and wooll to make us coates.

## 11.

“ We little wish, we need but little wealth,  
From cold and hunger vs to cloath and feed ;  
These are my sonnes, their care perserues from stealth  
Their fathers flocks, nor servants moe I need :  
Amid these groues I walke oft for my health,  
And to the fishes, birds and beastes giue heed,  
How they are fed, in forrest, spring and lake,  
And their contentment for ensample take.

## 12.

“ Time was (for each one hath his doting time,  
These siluer locks were golden tresses than)  
That countrie life I hated as a crime,  
And from the forrests sweet contentment ran,  
To Memphis statly pallace would I clime,  
And there became the mightie Caliphes man,  
And though I but a simple gardner weare,  
Yet could I marke abuses, see and heare.

## 13.

"Entised on with hope of future gaine,  
I suffred long what did my soule displease;  
But when my youth was spent, my hope was vaine,  
I felt my native strength at last decrease;  
I gan my losse of lustie yeeres complaine,  
And wisht I had enjoy'd the countries peace;  
I bod the court farewell, and with content  
My later age here have I quiet spent.

## 14.

"While thus he spake, Erminia husht and still  
His wise discourses heard, with great attention,  
His speeches graue those idle fancies kill,  
Which in her troubled soule bred such dissention;  
After much thought reformed was her will,  
Within those woods to dwell was her intention,  
Till fortune should occasion new afford,  
To turne her home to her desired Lord.

## 15.

"She said therefore, O shepherd fortunate!  
That troubles some didst whilom feele and proue,  
Yet liuest now in this contented state,  
Let my mishap thy thoughts to pitie moue,  
To entertaine me as a willing mate  
In shepherds life, which I admire and loue;  
Within these pleasant groues perchance my hart,  
Of her discomforts, may vnload some part.

## 16.

"If gold or wealth of most esteemed deare,  
If iewels rich, thou diddest hold in prise,  
Such store thereof, such plentie haue I seene,  
As to a greedie minde might well suffice:  
With that downe trickled many a siluer teare,  
Two christall streames fell from her watric eies;  
Part of her sad misfortunes than she told,  
And wept, and with her wept that shepherd old.

## 17.

“ With speeches kinde, he gan the virgin deare  
Towards his cottage gently home to guide ;  
His aged wife there made her homely cheare,  
Yet welcomde her, and plast her by her side.  
The Princesse dond a poore pastoraes geare,  
A kerchiefe course vpon her head she tide ;  
But yet her gestures and her lookes (I gesse)  
Were such, as ill beseem'd a shepherdesse.

## 18.

“ Not those rude garments could obscure, and hide,  
The heau'nly beautie of her angels face,  
Nor was her princely offspring damnifide,  
Or ought disparag'de, by those labours bace ;  
Her little flocks to pasture would she guide,  
And milke her goates, and in their folds them place,  
Both cheese and butter could she make, and frame  
Her selfe to please the shepherd and his dame.”





POMFRET.



## P O M F R E T.

OF Mr. John Pomfret nothing is known but from a slight and confused account prefixed to his poems by a nameless friend; who relates, that he was the son of the Rev. Mr. Pomfret, rector of Luton in Bedfordshire; that he was bred at Cambridge,<sup>1</sup> entered into orders, and was rector of Malden in Bedfordshire, and might have risen in the Church; but that, when he applied to Dr. Compton, bishop of London, for institution to a living of considerable value, to which he had been presented, he found a troublesome obstruction raised by a malicious interpretation of some passage in his "Choice;" from which it was inferred, that he considered happiness as more likely to be found in the company of a mistress than of a wife.

This reproach was easily obliterated: for it had happened to Pomfret as to almost all other men who plan schemes of life; he had departed from his purpose, and was then married.

The malice of his enemies had however a very fatal consequence: the delay constrained his attendance in London, where he caught the small-pox, and died in 1703, in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

He published his poems in 1699; and has been always

<sup>1</sup> He was of Queen's College, Cambridge, and by the University Register, appears to have taken his Bachelor's degree in 1684, and his Master's in 1698. P. CUNNINGHAM.

the favourite of that class of readers, who, without vanity or criticism, seek only their own amusement.<sup>1</sup>

His "Choice" exhibits a system of life adapted to common notions, and equal to common expectations; such a state as affords plenty and tranquillity, without exclusion of intellectual pleasures. Perhaps no composition in our language has been oftener perused than Pomfret's "Choice."

In his other poems there is an easy volubility; the pleasure of smooth metre is afforded to the ear, and the mind is not oppressed with ponderous or entangled with intricate sentiment. He pleases many, and he who pleases many must have some species of merit.

<sup>1</sup> Lowndes observes that during the eighteenth century no other volume of poems was so often reprinted, or held in such popular estimation. The 10th edition was published, 1740.



**DORSET.**



## DORSET.

OF the Earl of Dorset the character has been drawn so largely and so elegantly by Prior,<sup>1</sup> to whom he was familiarly known, that nothing can be added by a casual and; and, as its authour is so generally read, it would be useless officiousness to transcribe it.

Charles Sackville was born January 24, 1637. Having been educated under a private tutor, he travelled into Italy, and returned a little before the Restoration. He was chosen into the first parliament that was called, for East Winstead in Sussex, and soon became a favourite of Charles the Second; but undertook no publick employment, being too eager of the riotous and licentious pleasures which young men of high rank, who aspired to be thought wits, at that time imagined themselves intitled to indulge.

One of these Frolicks has, by the industry of Wood,<sup>2</sup> come down to posterity. Sackville, who was then Lord Buckhurst, with Sir Charles Sedley and Sir Thomas Ogle, got drunk at the Cock in Bow-street by Covent-garden, and, going into the balcony, exposed themselves to the populace in very indecent postures. At last, as they grew warmer, Sedley stood forth naked, and harangued the populace in such profane language, that the publick indignation was awakened; the crowd attempted to force the

<sup>1</sup> In the Dedication of his *Poems* to the Earl of Dorset's son. Ald. Prior, vol. i. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, ed. Bliss, 1848, p. 137.

door, and, being repulsed, drove in the performers with stones, and broke the windows of the house.

For this misdemeanour they were indicted, and Sedley was fined five hundred pounds : what was the sentence of the others is not known. Sedley employed Killigrew and another to procure a remission from the king ; but (mark the friendship of the dissolute !) they begged the fine for themselves, and exacted it to the last groat.

In 1665, Lord Buckhurst attended the Duke of York as a volunteer in the Dutch war ; and was in the battle of June 3, when eighteen great Dutch ships were taken, fourteen others were destroyed, and Opdam the admiral, who engaged the Duke, was blown up beside him, with all his crew.

On the day before the battle, he is said to have composed the celebrated song, "To all you Ladies now at land," with equal tranquillity of mind and promptitude of wit.<sup>1</sup> Seldom any splendid story is wholly true. I have heard from the late Earl of Orrery, who was likely to have good hereditary intelligence, that Lord Buckhurst had been a week employed upon it, and only retouched or finished it on the memorable evening.<sup>2</sup> But even this, whatever it may subtract from his facility, leaves him his courage.

He was soon after made a gentleman of the bedchamber, and sent on short embassies to France.

In 1674, the estate of his uncle James Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, came to him by its owner's death, and the title was conferred on him the year after. In 1677, he became, by the death of his father, Earl of Dorset, and inherited the estate of his family.

<sup>1</sup> See the Dedication of Prior's *Poems*, Ald. Prior, vol. i. p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> The song is printed (for the first time, I believe, in any collection of poems) in Linton's *Miscellany Poems*, 8vo. 1712, and is there called *A Song written at Sea by the late Earl of Dorset, in the first Dutch War*.



In 1684, having buried his first wife, of the family of Bagot, who left him no child, he married a daughter of the Earl of Northampton, celebrated both for beauty and understanding.

He received some favourable notice from King James ; but soon found it necessary to oppose the violence of his innovations, and with some other Lords appeared in Westminster-hall, to countenance the Bishops at their trial.

As enormities grew every day less supportable, he found it necessary to concur in the Revolution. He was one of those Lords who sat every day in council to preserve the publick peace, after the king's departure ; and, what is not the most illustrious action of his life, was employed to conduct the Princess Anne to Nottingham with a guard, such as might alarm the populace, as they passed, with false apprehensions of her danger. Whatever end may be designed, there is always something despicable in a trick.

He became, as may be easily supposed, a favourite of King William, who, the day after his accession, made him Lord chamberlain of the household, and gave him afterwards the garter. He happened to be among those that were tossed with the King in an open boat sixteen hours, in very rough and cold weather, on the coast of Holland. His health afterwards declined ; and on Jan. 19, 1705-6, he died at Bath.

He was a man whose elegance and judgement were universally confessed, and whose bounty to the learned and witty was generally known. To the indulgent affection of the publick, Lord Rochester bore ample testimony in this remark : *I know not how it is, but Lord Buckhurst may do what he will, yet is never in the wrong.*<sup>1</sup>

If such a man attempted poetry, we cannot wonder that

<sup>1</sup> *Poems, Ald. Prior, vol. i. p. 12.*

his works were praised. Dryden, whom, if Prior<sup>1</sup> tells truth, he distinguished by his beneficence, and who lavished his blandishments on those who are not known to have so well deserved them, undertaking to produce authors of our own country superior to those of antiquity, says, *I would instance your Lordship in satire, and Shakspeare in tragedy.*<sup>2</sup> Would it be imagined that, of this rival to antiquity, all the satires were little personal invectives, and that his longest composition was a song of eleven stanzas?

The blame, however, of this exaggerated praise falls on the encomiast, not upon the author; whose performances are, what they pretend to be, the effusions of a man of wit; gay, vigorous, and airy. His verses to Howard shew great fertility of mind, and his "Dorinda" has been imitated by Pope.

<sup>1</sup> Ald. Prior, vol. i. p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on Satire*, addressed to Charles, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex. S. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 14.

STEPNEY.

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting.



## STEPNEY.

**G**EORGE STEPNEY, descended from the Stepneys of Pendegrast in Pembrokeshire, was born at Westminster in 1663. Of his father's condition or fortune I have no account. Having received the first part of his education at Westminster, where he passed six years in the College, he went at nineteen to Cambridge,<sup>1</sup> where he continued a friendship begun at school with Mr. Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax. They came to London together, and are said to have been invited into publick life by the Duke<sup>2</sup> of Dorset.

His qualifications recommended him to many foreign employments, so that his time seems to have been spent in negotiations. In 1692 he was sent envoy to the Elector of Brandenburg; in 1693 to the Imperial Court; in 1694 to the Elector of Saxony; in 1696 to the Electors of Mentz and Cologne, and the Congress at Francfort; in 1698 a second time to Brandenburg; in 1699 to the King of Poland; in 1701 again to the Emperor; and in 1706 to the States General. In 1697 he was made one of the commissioners of trade. His life was busy, and not long. He died in 1707; and is buried in Westminster-Abbey, with this epitaph, which *Jacob*<sup>3</sup> transcribed.

<sup>1</sup> Stepney matriculated pensioner of Trinity College, 15 Dec. 1682, he took his B.A. as 4th Wrangler in 1685-6, M.A. 1689, and was elected fellow of Trinity in 1687.

<sup>2</sup> This is, of course, a mistake for "Earl."

<sup>3</sup> *Giles Jacob in The Poetical Register: or, the Lives and Characters of all the English Poets.* London, 1719-1723. 8vo. 2 vols.

H. S. E.

GEORGIUS STEPNEIUS, Armiger,

Vir

Ob Ingenii acumen,

Literarum Scientiam,

Morum Suavitatem,

Rerum Usam,

Virorum Amplissimorum Consuetudinem,

Linguae, Styli, ac Vitae Elegantiam,

Præclara Officia cum Britanniae tum Europæ  
præstita,

Sua ætate multum celebratus,

Apud posteros semper celebrandus ;

Plurimas Legationes obiit

Ea Fide, Diligentia, ac Felicitate,

Ut Augustissimorum Principum

Gulielmi &amp; Annæ

Spem in illo repositam

Numquam fefellerit,

Haud raro superaverit.

Post longum honorum Cursum

Brevi Temporis Spatio confectum,

Cum Naturæ parum, Famæ satis vixerat,

Animam ad altiora aspirantem placide efflavit.

On the Left Hand :

G. S.

Ex Equestri Familia Stepneiorum,

De Pendegrast, in Comitatu

Pembrochiensi oriundus,

Westmonasterii natus est, A.D. 1663.

Electus in Collegium

Sancti Petri Westmonast. A. 1676.

Sancti Trinitatis Cantab. 1682.

Consiliariorum quibus Commercii

Cura commissa est 1697.

Chelseiæ mortuus, &amp;, comitante

Magna Procerum

Frequentia, huc elatus, 1707.

It is reported that the juvenile compositions of Stepney *le grey authors blush*.<sup>1</sup> I know not whether his poems appear such wonders to the present age. One cannot easily find the reason for which the world has sometimes conspired to squander praise. It is not very likely that he wrote very early as well as he ever wrote; but the performances of youth have many favourers, because the authors yet lay no claim to publick honours, and therefore not considered as rivals by the distributors of fame.

He apparently professed himself a poet, and added his name to those of the other wits in the version of "Juvenal;" but he is a very licentious translator, and does not recompense his neglect of the author by beauties of his own. In his original poems, now and then, a happy line may perhaps be found, and now and then a short composition may give pleasure. But there is in the whole little either the grace of wit, or the vigour of nature.<sup>2</sup>

*id. infr.* Oldisworth, in his character of Edmund Smith, vol. ii.

Mr. Peter Cunningham remarks that the Diplomatic Correspondence of Stepney is now in the British Museum but does not add anything to our knowledge of his poetic life.





J. PHILIPS.

1

## J. PHILIPS.

PHILIPS was born on the 30th of December, 1676,<sup>1</sup> at Bampton in Oxfordshire; of which place his father Dr. John Philips, archdeacon of Salop, was minister. The first part of his education was domestick, after which he went to Winchester, where, as we are told by Dr. Phillips his biographer,<sup>2</sup> he was soon distinguished by the purity of his exercises; and, what is less easily to be believed, so much endeared himself to his schoolfellows, by his civility and good-nature, that they, without murmur or complaint, saw him indulged by the master with particular liberties. It is related, that, when he was at school, he mingled in play with the other boys, but retired to his chamber; where his sovereign pleasure was to sit, hour after hour, while his hair was combed by somebody, whose office he found means to procure. At school he became acquainted with the poets ancient and modern, and fixed his attention particularly on

entry in the Register of Baptisms at Bampton is: "1677, Jan. 7. John Philips filius Stephani," and therefore the date given for his birth is probably correct. It is a singular fact that he did not go to Winchester till 1691, when he was 15, although registered there as "11," and did not matriculate at Oxford till 1697, when he was registered instead of 21.

*Phillips, late Student of Christchurch, Oxon. Whole Works; by Mr. Sewell. Lond. Tonson. 1708. Many times repub-*

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J. PHILIPS.

Si Ingenium nescias, ipsius Opera consule ;  
 Si Tumulum desideras,  
 Templum adi *Westmonasteriense* :  
 Qualis quantusque Vir fuerit,  
 Dicat elegans illa & preclara,  
 Quæ cenotaphium ibi decorat  
 Inscriptio.

Quàm interim erga Cognatos pius & officiosus,  
 Testetur hoc saxum

A MARIA PHILIPS Matre ipsius pientissimâ,  
 Dilecti Filii Memorîæ non sine Lacrymis dicatum.

His Epitaph at Westminster :<sup>1</sup>

Herefordiæ conduntur Ossa,  
 Hoc in Delubro statuitur Imago,  
 Britanniam omnem pervagatur Fama  
 J O H A N N I S P H I L I P S :  
 Qui Viris bonis doctisque juxta charus,  
 Immortale suum Ingenium,  
 Eruditione multiplici excultum,  
 Miro animi candore,  
 Eximiâ morum simplicitate,  
 Honestavit.  
 Litterarum Amœnorum sitim,  
 Quam Wintoniæ Puer sentire cœperat,  
 Inter Ædis Christi Alumnos jugiter explevit,  
 In illo Musarum Domicilio  
 Præclaris Æmulorum studiis excitatus,  
 Optimis scribendi Magistris semper intentus,  
 Carmina sermone Patrio composuit  
 A Græcis Latinisque fontibus feliciter deducta,  
 Atticis Romanisque auribus omnino digna,  
 Versuum quippe Harmoniam  
 Rythmo didicerat.  
 Antiquo illo, libero, multiformi  
 Ad res ipsas apto prorsus, & attemperato,  
 Non Numeris in eundem ferè orbem redeuntibus,  
 Non Clausularum similiter cadentium sono  
 Metiri :

<sup>1</sup> *vid. supr. Life of Milton, p. 158.*

J. PHILIPS.

Uni in hoc laudis genere Miltoño secundus,  
Primoque pœne Par.  
Res seu Tenuēs, seu Grandes, seu Mediocres  
Ornandas sumserat,  
Nusquam, non quod decuit,  
Et videt, & assecutus est,  
Egregius, quocunque Stylum verteret,  
Fandi author, & Modorum artifex.

Fas sit Huic,  
Auso licèt à tuâ Metrorum Lege discedere  
O Poesis Anglicanæ Pater, atque Conditor, Chaucere,  
Alterum tibi latus claudere,  
Vatum certe Cineres, tuos undique stipantium  
Non dedecebit Chorum.  
SIMON HARCOURT Miles,  
Viri benè de se, de Litteris meriti  
Quoad viveret Fautor,  
Post Obitum piè memor,  
Hoc illi Saxum poni voluit.

J. PHILIPS, STEPHANI, S. T. P. Archidiaconi  
Salop, Filius, natus est Bamptoniæ  
in agro Oxon. Dec. 30, 1676.  
Obiit Herefordiæ, Feb. 15, 1708.

Philips has been always praised, without contradiction, a man modest, blameless, and pious; who bore narrowness of fortune without discontent, and tedious and painful studies without impatience; beloved by those that knew him but not ambitious to be known. He was probably formed for a wide circle. His conversation is commended for its innocent gaiety, which seems to have been only among his intimates: for I have been told, that he was in company silent and barren, and employed only on the pleasures of his pipe. His addiction to smoking is mentioned by one of his biographers, who remarks that in all his writings, except "Blenheim," he has found no opportunity of celebrating the fragrant fume. In company he was probably one of those who please by not

offending, and whose person was loved because his writings were admired. He died honoured and lamented, before any part of his reputation had withered, and before his patron St. John had disgraced him.

His works are few. The "Splendid Shilling" has the uncommon merit of an original design, unless it may be thought precluded by the ancient "Centos."<sup>1</sup> To degrade the sounding words and stately construction of Milton, by an application to the lowest and most trivial things, gratifies the mind with a momentary triumph over that grandeur which hitherto held its captives in admiration; the words and things are presented with a new appearance, and novelty is always grateful where it gives no pain.

But the merit of such performances begins and ends with the first author. He that should again adapt Milton's phrase to the gross incidents of common life, and even adapt it with more art, which would not be difficult, must yet expect but a small part of the praise which Philips has obtained; he can only hope to be considered as the repeater of a jest.

"The parody on Milton," says Gildon, "is the only tolerable production of its author." This is a censure too dogmatical and violent. The poem of "Blenheim" was never denied to be tolerable, even by those who do not allow its supreme excellence. It is indeed the poem of a scholar, *all ineexpert of war*; of a man who writes books from books, and studies the world in a college. He seems to have formed his ideas of the field of "Bleinheim" from the battles of the heroic ages, or the tales of chivalry, with very little comprehension of the qualities necessary to the com-

<sup>1</sup> These medleys or patchwork poems, made up of lines from Homer, Virgil, &c., were in fashion when Latin literature had sunk very low. There is an account of them in Borgen's *De Centoribus Homericis et Vergilianis*. Copenhagen, 1628.



position of a modern hero, which Addison has displayed with so much propriety. He makes *Marston* behold at distance the slaughter made by *Tallard*, then haste to encounter and restrain him, and mow his way through ranks made headless by his sword.

He imitates Milton's numbers indeed, but imitates them very injudiciously. Deformity is easily copied: and whatever there is in Milton which the reader wishes away, all that is obsolete, peculiar, or licentious, is accumulated with great care by Philips. Milton's verse was harmonious, in proportion to the general state of our metre in Milton's age; and, if he had written after the improvements made by Dryden, it is reasonable to believe that he would have admitted a more pleasing modulation of numbers into his work; but Philips sits down with a resolution to make no more musick than he found; to want all that his master wanted, though he is very far from having what his master had. Those asperities, therefore, that are venerable in the *Paradise Lost*," are contemptible in the "*Blenheim*."

There is a Latin ode \* written to his patron St. John, in return for a present of wine and tobacco, which cannot be passed without notice. It is gay and elegant, and exhibits

\* This ode I am willing to mention, because there seems to be an error in all the printed copies, which is, I find, retained in the text. They all read;

"Quam Gratiarum cura decentium  
O! O! labellis cui Venus infidet."

The author probably wrote,

"Quam Gratiarum cura decentium  
Ornat; labellis cui Venus infidet."

JOHNSON.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cunningham notes this as a remarkable instance of sagacious criticism. The first edition of the ode reads *Ornat*.

several artful accommodations of classick expressions to new purposes. It seems better turned than the odes of Hannes.<sup>1</sup>

To the poem on "Cider," written in imitation of the "Georgicks," may be given this peculiar praise, that it is grounded in truth; that the precepts which it contains are exact and just; and that it is therefore, at once, a book of entertainment and of science. This I was told by Miller,<sup>2</sup> the great gardener and botanist, whose expression was, that *there were many books written on the same subject in prose, which do not contain so much truth as that poem.*

In the disposition of his matter, so as to intersperse precepts relating to the culture of trees, with sentiments more generally alluring, and in easy and graceful transitions from one subject to another, he has very diligently imitated his master; but he unhappily pleased himself with blank verse, and supposed that the numbers of Milton, which impress the mind with veneration, combined as they are with subjects of inconceivable grandeur, could be sustained by images which at most can rise only to elegance. Contending angels may shake the regions of heaven in blank verse; but the flow of equal measures, and the embellishment of rhyme, must recommend to our attention the art of engrafting, and decide the merit of the *redstreak* and *pearmain*.

What study could confer, Philips had obtained; but natural deficiency cannot be supplied. He seems not born

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Edward Hannes was admitted on the foundation at Westminster in 1678, elected to Christchurch, Oxford, in 1682, Public Professor of Chemistry in 1690. He was afterwards physician to Queen Anne, and knighted. He was the author of several poems in the *Muse Anglicanæ*, and left £1,000 towards completing the quadrangle at Christchurch.

<sup>2</sup> Miller, Philip (1691-1771). Author of the *Gardener's Dictionary*, which may be said to have laid the foundation of all the horticultural taste and knowledge in Europe. He was gardener to the Company of *ries* at Chelsea, as his father had been before him.

to greatness and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often surprise with unexpected excellence; but perhaps to his last poem may be applied what Tully said of the work of Lucretius, that *it is written with much art, though with few blazes of genius*.<sup>1</sup>

The following fragment, written by Edmund Smith, upon the works of Philips, has been transcribed from the Bodleian manuscripts.

"A prefatory Discourse to the Poem on Mr. Philips, with a character of his writings."

"It is altogether as equitable some account should be given of those who have distinguished themselves by their writings, as of those who are renowned for great actions. It is but reasonable they, who contribute so much to the immortality of others, should have some share in it themselves; and since their genius only is discovered by their works, it is just that their virtues should be recorded by their friends. For no modest men (as the person I write of was in perfection) will write their own panegyrics; and it is very hard that they should go without reputation, only because they the more deserve it. The end of writing Lives is for the imitation of the readers. It will be in the power of very few to imitate the duke of Marlborough; we must be content with admiring his great qualities and actions, without hopes of following them. The private and social virtues are more easily transcribed. The 'Life of Cowley' is more instructive, as well as more fine, than any we have in our language. And it is to be wished, since Mr. Philips had so many of the good qualities of that poet, that I had some of the abilities of his historian.

"The Grecian philosophers have had their Lives written,

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *Epistolæ ad Fratrem*, vol. ii. p. 11. The reading is, however, said to be doubtful. See Munro's *Lucretii Cari.*, p. 313, 3rd ed.

their morals commended, and their sayings recorded. Mr. Philips had all the virtues to which most of them only pretended, and all their integrity without any of their affectation.

“The French are very just to eminent men in this point; not a learned man nor a poet can die, but all Europe must be acquainted with his accomplishments. They give praise and expect it in their turns: they commend their Patru’s and Molière’s as well as their Conde’s and Turenne’s; their Pellisons and Racines have their elogies as well as the prince whom they celebrate; and their poems, their mercuries, and orations, nay their very gazettes, are filled with the praises of the learned.

“I am satisfied, had they a Philips among them, and known how to value him; had they one of his learning, his temper, but above all of that particular turn of humour, that altogether new genius, he had been an example to their poets, and a subject of their panegyricks, and perhaps set in competition with the ancients, to whom only he ought to submit.

“I shall therefore endeavour to do justice to his memory, since nobody else undertakes it. And indeed I can assign no cause why so many of his acquaintance (that are as willing and more able than myself to give an account of him) should forbear to celebrate the memory of one so dear to them, but only that they look upon it as a work intirely belonging to me.

“I shall content myself with giving only a character of the person and his writings, without meddling with the transactions of his life, which was altogether private: I shall only make this known observation of his family, that there was scarce so many extraordinary men in any one. I have been acquainted with five of his brothers (of which three are still living), all men of fine parts, yet all of a very unlike temper and genius. So that their fruitful



mother, like the mother of the gods, seems to have produced a numerous offspring, all of different though uncommon faculties. Of the living, neither their modesty nor the humour of the present age permits me to speak: of the dead, I may say something.

"One of them had made the greatest progress in the study of the law of nature and nations of any one I know. He had perfectly mastered, and even improved, the notions of Grotius, and the more refined ones of Puffendorf. He could refute Hobbes with as much solidity as some of greater name, and expose him with as much wit as Echard. That noble study, which requires the greatest reach of reason and nicety of distinction, was not at all difficult to him. 'Twas a national loss to be deprived of one who understood a science so necessary, and yet so unknown in England. I shall add only, he had the same honesty and sincerity as the person I write of, but more heat: the former was more inclined to argue, the latter to divert: one employed his reason more; the other his imagination: the former had been well qualified for those posts, which the modesty of the latter made him refuse. His other dead brother would have been an ornament to the college of which he was a member. He had a genius either for poetry or oratory; and, though very young, composed several very agreeable pieces. In all probability he would have wrote as finely, as his brother did nobly. He might have been the Waller, as the other was the Milton of his time. The one might celebrate Marlborough, the other his beautiful offspring. This had not been so fit to describe the actions of heroes as the virtues of private men. In a word, he had been fitter for my place; and while his brother was writing upon the greatest men that any age ever produced, in a style equal to them, he might have served as a panegyrist on him.

"This is all I think necessary to say of his family. I shall

proceed to himself and his writings ; which I shall first treat of, because I know they are censured by some out of envy, and more out of ignorance.

“The ‘Splendid Shilling,’ which is far the least considerable, has the more general reputation, and perhaps hinders the character of the rest. The style agreed so well with the burlesque, that the ignorant thought it could become nothing else. Every body is pleased with that work. But to judge rightly of the other, requires a perfect mastery of poetry and criticism, a just contempt of the little turns and witticisms now in vogue, and, above all, a perfect understanding of poetical diction and description.

“All that have any taste of poetry will agree, that the great burlesque is much to be preferred to the low. It is much easier to make a great thing appear little, than a little one great : Cotton and others of a very low genius have done the former ; but Philips, Garth, and Boileau, only the latter.

“A picture in miniature is every painter’s talent ; but a piece for a cupola, where all the figures are enlarged, yet proportioned to the eye, requires a master’s hand.

“It must still be more acceptable than the low burlesque, because the images of the latter are mean and filthy, and the language itself entirely unknown to all men of good breeding. The style of Billingsgate would not make a very agreeable figure at St. James’s. A gentleman would take but little pleasure in language, which he would think it hard to be accosted in, or in reading words which he could not pronounce without blushing. The lofty burlesque is the more to be admired, because, to write it, the author must be master of two of the most different talents in nature. A talent to find out and expose what is ridiculous, is very different from that which is to raise and elevate. We must read Virgil and Milton for the one, and

Horace and Hudibras for the other. We know that the authors of excellent comedies have often failed in the grave style, and the tragedian as often in comedy. Admiration and Laughter are of such opposite natures, that they are seldom created by the same person. The man of mirth is always observing the follies and weaknesses, the serious writer the virtues or crimes of mankind; one is pleased with contemplating a beau, the other a hero: Even from the same object they would draw different ideas: Achilles could appear in very different lights to Thersites and Alexander. The one would admire the courage and greatness of his soul; the other would ridicule the vanity and rashness of his temper. As the satyrist says to Hanibal:

“— I curre per Alpes,  
Ut pueris placeas, & declamatio fias.”<sup>1</sup>

“The contrariety of style to the subject pleases the more strongly, because it is more surprising; the expectation of the reader is pleasantly deceived, who expects an humble style from the subject, or a great subject from the style. It pleases the more universally, because it is agreeable to the taste both of the grave and the merry; but more particularly so to those who have a relish of the best writers, and the noblest sort of poetry. I shall produce only one passage out of this poet, which is the misfortune of his alligaskins:

“My Galligaskins, which have long withstood  
The winter’s fury and encroaching frosts,  
By time subdued (what will not time subdue!).”

This is admirably pathetical, and shews very well the dissimilitudes of sublunary things. The rest goes on to prodigious height; and a man in Greenland could hardly have made a more pathetick and terrible complaint. Is it not surprising that the subject should be

<sup>1</sup> Juv. Sat. x. 166, 167.



so mean, and the verse so pompous; that the least things in his poetry, as in a microscope, should grow great and formidable to the eye? especially considering that, not understanding French, he had no model for his style? that he should have no writer to imitate, and himself be inimitable? that he should do all this before he was twenty? at an age, which is usually pleased with a glare of false thoughts, little turns, and unnatural fustian? at an age, at which Cowley, Dryden, and I had almost said Virgil, were inconsiderable? So soon was his imagination at its full strength, his judgement ripe, and his humour complete.

“This poem was written for his own diversion, without any design of publication. It was communicated but to *me*; but soon spread, and fell into the hands of pirates. It was put out, vilely mangled, by Ben Bragge; *and impudently said to be corrected by the author.* This grievance is now grown more epidemical; and no man now has a right to his own thoughts, or a title to his own writings. Xenophon answered the Persian, who demanded his arms, ‘We have nothing now left but our arms and our valour; if we surrender the one, how shall we make use of the other?’ Poets have nothing but their wits and their writings; and if they are plundered of the latter, I don’t see what good the former can do them. To pirate, and publickly own it, to prefix their names to the works they steal, to own and avow the theft, I believe, was never yet heard of but in England. It will sound oddly to posterity, that, in a polite nation, in an enlightened age, under the direction of the most wise, most learned, and most generous encouragers of knowledge in the world, the property of a mechanick should be better secured than that of a scholar; that the poorest manual operations should be more valued than the noblest products of the brain; that it should be felony to rob a cobbler of a pair of shoes, and no crime to de-



give the best author of his whole subsistence : that nothing could make a man a sure title to his own writings but the upidity of them ; that the works of Dryden should meet with less encouragement than those of his own Flecknoe, Blackmore ; that Tillotson and St. George, Tom Thumpe and Temple, should be set on an equal foot. This is the reason why this very paper has been so long delayed ; and while the most impudent and scandalous libels are publicly vended by the pirates, this innocent work is forced to sail abroad as if it were a libel.

"Our present writers are by these wretches reduced to the same condition Virgil was, when the centurion seized on his estate. But I don't doubt but I can fix upon the Læcenas of the present age, that will retrieve them from . . . But, whatever effect this piracy may have upon us, it contributed very much to the advantage of Mr. Philips ; it helped him to a reputation, which he neither desired nor expected, and to the honour of being put upon a work of which he did not think himself capable ; but the event bewitched his modesty. And it was reasonable to hope, that he, who could raise mean subjects so high, should still be more elevated on greater themes ; that he, that could draw such noble ideas from a shilling, could not fail upon such subject as the duke of Marlborough, *which is capable of rightening even the most low and trifling genius.* And, indeed, most of the great works which have been produced in the world have been owing less to the poet than the patron. Men of the greatest genius are sometimes lazy, and want a spur ; often modest, and dare not venture in publick ; they certainly know their faults in the worst things ; and even their best things they are not fond of, because the idea of what they ought to be is far above what they are. This induced me to believe that Virgil desired his work might be burnt, had not the same Augustus that desired him to write them, preserved them from destruction. A scribbling

beau may imagine a Poet *may* be induced to write, by the very pleasure he finds in writing; but that is seldom, when people are necessitated to it. I have known men row, and use very hard labour, for diversion, which, if they had been tied to, they would have thought themselves very unhappy.

"But to return to 'Blenheim,' that work so much admired by some, and censured by others. I have often wished he had wrote it in Latin, that he might be out of the reach of the empty criticks, who could have as little understood his meaning in that language as they do his beauties in his own.

"False criticks have been the plague of all ages; Milton himself, in a very polite court, has been compared to the rumbling of a wheel-barrow: he had been on the wrong side, and therefore could not be a good poet. *And this, perhaps, may be Mr. Philips's case.*

"But I take generally the ignorance of his readers to be the occasion of their dislike. People that have formed their taste upon the French writers, can have no relish for Philips: they admire points and turns, and consequently have no judgement of what is great and majestick; he must look little in their eyes, when he soars so high as to be almost out of their view. I cannot therefore allow any admirer of the French to be a judge of Blenheim, nor any who takes Bouhours for a compleat critick. He generally judges of the ancients by the moderns, and not the moderns by the ancients; he takes those passages of their own authors to be really sublime which come the nearest to it; he often calls that a noble and a great thought which is only a pretty and fine one, and has more instances of the sublime out of Ovid de Tristibus, than he has out of all Virgil.

"I shall allow, therefore, only those to be judges of Philips, who make the ancients, and particularly Virgil, their standard.

"But, before I enter on this subject, I shall consider what is particular in the style of Philips, and examine what ought to be the style of heroick poetry, and next inquire how far he is come up to that style.

"His style is particular, because he lays aside rhyme, and writes in blank verse, and uses old words, and frequently postpones the adjective to the substantive, and the substantive to the verb; and leaves out little particles, *a*, and *the*; *her*, and *his*; and uses frequent appositions. Now let us examine, whether these alterations of style be conformable to the true sublime."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smith's poem on Philips to which this "Discourse" was prefixed, was published in folio by Lintot, without date. *Vid. infr. Life of Edmund Smith*, vol. ii.





W A L S H.



## W A L S H.

**W**ILLIAM WALSH, the son of Joseph Walsh, Esq ; of Abberley in Worcestershire, was born in 1663, as appears from the account of Wood ; who relates, that at the age of fifteen he became, in 1678, a gentleman commoner of Wadham College.

He left the university without a degree, and pursued his studies in London and at home ; that he studied, in whatever place, is apparent from the effect ; for he became, in Dr. Dryden's opinion, *the best critick in the nation*.<sup>1</sup>

He was not, however, merely a critick or a scholar, but a man of fashion, and, as Dennis remarks, ostentatiously splendid in his dress. He was likewise a member of parliament and a courtier, knight of the shire for his native county in several parliaments ; in another the representative of Richmond in Yorkshire ; and gentleman of the horse to Queen Anne under the duke of Somerset.

Some of his verses shew him to have been a zealous friend to the Revolution ; but his political ardour did not abate his reverence or kindness for Dryden, to whom he gave a Dissertation<sup>2</sup> on Virgil's Pastorals, in which, however studied, he discovers some ignorance of the laws of French versification.

In 1705, he began to correspond with Mr. Pope, in whom he discovered very early the power of poetry. Their letters

<sup>1</sup> See Dryden's Postscript to Virgil.

<sup>2</sup> This was written, not by Walsh, but by Dr. Knightly Chetwood. Malone's *Dryden*, vol. iv. p. 547.

are written upon the pastoral comedy of the Italians, and those pastorals which Pope was then preparing to publish.

The kindnesses which are first experienced are seldom forgotten. Pope always retained a grateful memory of Walsh's notice, and mentioned him in one of his latter pieces among those that had encouraged his juvenile studies :

“——Granville the polite,<sup>1</sup>

And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write.”<sup>2</sup>

In his *Essay on Criticism*<sup>3</sup> he had given him more splendid praise, and, in the opinion of his learned commentator,<sup>4</sup> sacrificed a little of his judgement to his gratitude.

The time of his death I have not learned. It must have happened between 1707, when he wrote to Pope; and 1721, when Pope praised him in his *Essay*. The epitaph<sup>5</sup> makes him forty-six years old: if Wood's account be right, he died in 1709.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Granville, afterwards Lord Lansdowne, known for his poems, most of which he composed very young, and proposed Waller as his model. Pope's note to *Granville's Moving Lays*, first pastoral, l. 46, *E. C.* vol. i. p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. *E. C.* vol. iii. p. 251. *Ald. Pope*, vol. iii. p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> “Such late was Walsh, the Muse's judge and friend,

Who justly knew to blame or commend,

To failings mild, but zealous for desert,

\* \* \* \* \*

The clearest head, and the sincerest heart,” &c.

*Essay on Criticism*, part iii. *Ald. Pope*, vol. ii. p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Warton's *Essay on Pope*, vol. i. p. 205, 4th edition.

<sup>5</sup> About fifteen I got acquainted with Mr. Walsh. He used to encourage me much, and used to tell me that there was one way left of excelling, for though we had several great poets, we never had one great poet that was correct; and he desired me to make that my study and aim. Pope in *Spence ed.* *Singer*, p. 280.

<sup>6</sup> On a flat stone in the church of Abberley, in Worcestershire.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>7</sup> He died without issue at Marlborough, Wiltshire, 15th March 1707-8.—P. CUNNINGHAM.



He is known more by his familiarity with greater men, than by any thing done or written by himself.

His works are not numerous. In prose he wrote "Eulogia, a defence of women;"<sup>1</sup> which Dryden honoured with a Preface.

"Esculapius, or the Hospital of Fools," published after death.

"A collection of Letters and Poems, amorous and galant," was published in the volumes called Dryden's "Miscellany,"<sup>2</sup> and some other occasional pieces.<sup>3</sup>

To his Poems and Letters is prefixed a very judicious preface upon Epistolary Composition and Amorous Poetry. In his "Golden Age restored," there was something of humour, while the facts were recent; but it now strikes longer. In his imitation of Horace, the first stanzas happily turned; and in all his writings there are pleasant passages. He has however more elegance than vigour, and seldom rises higher than to be pretty.<sup>4</sup>

*A Dialogue Concerning Women, being a Defence of the Sex*, 1691. The letter on this dialogue from Dryden to Walsh, is one of the five letters given in Mr. Robert Bell's *Life of Dryden*.

*Miscellany Poems*: containing a variety of New Translations of the ancient Poets: together with several original Poems. By the most elegant Hands. Publish'd by Mr. Dryden. 1684. 6 vols.

Mr. E. Gosse observes (Ward's *Sel. Eng. Poets*, vol. iii. p. 7) that Walsh is the author of the only sonnet written in English between Milton's in 1658, and Warton's about 1750.

Boswell gives, with a long note, some verses from Walsh's *Retirement*, quoted by Johnson "with great pathos." The whole passage is interesting as an exhibition of Johnson's fine memory, and his peculiar method of dealing with quotations. See Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. ii. pp. 130, 131.



DRYDEN.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

[Dryden's works, of different dates, were collected and published in the poet's life-time (1695). Of the various editions which have since appeared, the most important are—Malone's edition of the *Prose Works* in 1800, on account of the Life which he prefixed, and which is still the standard authority; and Sir Walter Scott's, in 18 vols., 1808, of which a new edition by Mr. Saintsbury is not yet completed.

The contractions used in the present notes to this Life are as follows:—

S. S. D. Saintsbury's edition of Scott's *Dryden*, extending to vol. xiii.

S. D. The five last volumes of Scott's edition, namely, those which have not yet been republished.

Ald. D. The Aldine edition of Dryden.

E. C. Elwin and Courthope's edition of Pope.

Malone. The *Life of Dryden* prefixed to Malone's edition of the *Prose Works*, 1800.]



## D R Y D E N.

OF the great poet whose life I am about to delineate,<sup>1</sup> the curiosity which his reputation must excite, will require a display more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they revered his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have applied.<sup>2</sup>

JOHN DRYDEN was born August 9, 1631, at Aldwinkle near Oundle, the son of Erasmus Dryden of Tichmersh; who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, Baronet, of Anons Ashby.<sup>3</sup> All these places are in Northamptonshire; but the original stock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

<sup>1</sup> See Boswell's *Johnson* on the *Life of Dryden*, with various readings, vol. iv. pp. 8-10.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cunningham remarks that since Johnson wrote the industry, or, as Scott more happily calls it, the "pious enthusiasm" of Malone, has discovered so much about Dryden that we now know more of him than of any other author of his age. See the *Life of Dryden*, prefixed to Malone's edition of his prose works, published 1800.

<sup>3</sup> The poet was the eldest of fourteen children. His mother was Mary, daughter of Henry Pickering, rector of Aldwinkle. The precise date of his birth is uncertain. The inscription on the monument in Westminster Abbey, erected to his memory by Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, has "Natus 1632. Mortuis May 1. 1700." His parents were married October 21, 1630, and as it has lately been discovered that his grandfather became Rector of Aldwinkle, All Saints, in 1597, the tradition that he was born in the parsonage house of that village is in all probability correct. Mr. Christie, in his *Life of Dryden*, gives the latest discoveries on these points. *Globe* ed. *Dryden*, p. xvi.

He is reported by his last biographer,<sup>1</sup> Derrick, to have inherited from his father<sup>2</sup> an estate of two hundred a year, and to have been bred, as was said, an Anabaptist. For either of these particulars no authority is given.<sup>3</sup> Such a fortune ought to have secured him from that poverty which seems always to have oppressed him; or if he had wasted it, to have made him ashamed of publishing his necessities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a scrutiny sufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waste of his patrimony. He was indeed sometimes reproached for his first religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick's intelligence was partly true, and partly erroneous.

From Westminster School, where he was instructed as one of the king's scholars by Dr. Busby,<sup>4</sup> whom he long after continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Westminster scholarships at Cambridge.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was the Samuel Derrick for whom Johnson had "a great kindness," and who was Boswell's first tutor in the ways of London. Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. i. p. 86. His *Life of Dryden* was prefixed to an edition of the *Miscellaneous Works*, 1760. 4 vols. 8vo.

<sup>2</sup> Malone shows that the poet's father died in 1654, and that this inheritance was two-thirds of a small estate near Blakesley, in Northamptonshire, worth in all about £60 a year, the remaining third becoming the property of Dryden at his mother's death in 1676.

<sup>3</sup> Malone gives several quotations from lampoons, &c., which seem to show a general impression that Dryden was brought up among "the persuasions then so numerous and so rife."

<sup>4</sup> Dryden inscribes the Fifth Satire of Persius to the Rev. Dr. Busby, "to whom I am not only obliged myself for the best part of my own education and that of my two sons; but also have received from him the first and truest taste of Persius. May he be pleased to find in this translation the gratitude, or at least some small acknowledgment of his unworthy scholar, at the distance of forty-two years from the time when I departed from under his tuition. Ald. D. vol. v. p. 195.

<sup>5</sup> Dryden matriculated pensioner of Trinity College, Cambridge,

of his school performances: his speech, after the death of Lord Hastings, composed with great skill of such concerns as notwithstanding he performed on by Walter and Leston, the exercise of his talent in reputation. Lord Hastings died, the school-boy his poet has made of the posthumous life deceased, and legends: at last create them into story all day.

"No corner here is left, as chance may be  
Whom some might seem a constellation"

at the university he does not appear to have been distinguished, or to have attained his merit in or on fictitious subjects or public exercises. He is considered that he was purposed to be an author at first to be a student. He obtained whatever was remain, no following in the College. Virgil was added cannot now be shown, and it is said to prove he thought himself injured, he show how to compare the Life of Plutarch he mentions his education in the age with *genuit*, but in a prologue to *Horace* he these lines:

"Oxford to him a dearer name shall be  
Than his own mother-university  
Thence did his rude unknowing youth engage  
He chooses Athens in his riper age."

was not till the death of Cromwell in 1658, that he me a public candidate for fame, by publishing "Hercules

6th, 1650, and took his B.A. in 1653-4. The M.A. degree was red on him in 1658 at the King's request.

his was one of the ninety-eight poems in *Lucifera Musarum*, the of the Muses, express in elegiac, son., &c., set forth by Richard (ie) Lond. 1650. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 1.

ce S. S. D. vol. i. p. 22, and Malone, p. 16.

ld. D. vol. iii. p. 95. This is from one of the prologues to the raity of Oxford, the date of which is not certainly known, but it robably 1681. S. S. D. vol. x. p. 386.

Stanzas on the late Lord Protector;"<sup>1</sup> which, compared with the verses of Sprat and Waller on the same occasion, were sufficient to raise great expectations of the rising poet.

When the king was restored, Dryden, like the other panegyrists of usurpation, changed his opinion, or his profession, and published "*Astrea Redux*,"<sup>2</sup> a poem on the happy restoration and return of his most sacred Majesty King Charles the Second."

The reproach of inconstancy was, on this occasion, shared with such numbers, that it produced neither hatred nor disgrace; if he changed, he changed with the nation. It was, however, not totally forgotten when his reputation raised him enemies.

The same year he praised the new king in a second poem on his restoration.<sup>3</sup> In the "*Astrea*" was the line,

"An horrid *stillness* first *invades* the ear,  
And in that silence we a tempest fear,"

for which he was persecuted with perpetual ridicule, perhaps with more than was deserved. *Silence* is indeed mere privation; and, so considered, cannot *invade*; but privation likewise certainly is *darkness*, and probably *cold*; yet poetry has never been refused the right of ascribing effects or agency to them as to positive powers. No man scruples to say that *darkness* hinders him from his work; or that *cold* has killed the plants. Death is also privation, yet who has made any difficulty of assigning to Death a dart and the power of striking?

In settling the order of his works, there is some difficulty;<sup>4</sup> for, even when they are important enough to be formally

<sup>1</sup> Ald. D. vol. i. p. 6. S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Published 1660. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 13; S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> To his Sacred Majesty, a Panegyric on his Coronation. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Vid. chronological table, *infra*. p. 496.



ffered to a patron, he does not commonly date his dedication; the time of writing and publishing is not always the same; nor can the first editions be easily found, if even from them could be obtained the necessary information.

The time at which his first play<sup>1</sup> was exhibited is not certainly known, because it was not printed till it was some years afterwards altered and revived; but since the plays are said to be printed in the order in which they were written, from the dates of some, those of others may be inferred; and thus it may be collected that in 1663, in the thirty-second year of his life, he commenced a writer for the stage; compelled undoubtedly by necessity, for he appears never to have loved that exercise of his genius, or to have much pleased himself with his own dramas.

Of the stage, when he had once invaded it, he kept possession for many years; not indeed without the competition of rivals who sometimes prevailed, or the censure of criticks, which was often poignant and often just; but with such a degree of reputation as made him at least secure of being heard, whatever might be the final determination of the public.

His first piece was a comedy called the "Wild Gallant." He began with no happy auguries; for his performance was so much disapproved, that he was compelled to recall it, and change it from its imperfect state to the form in which it now appears, and which is yet sufficiently defective to vindicate the criticks.

I wish that there were no necessity of following the progress of his theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole series of his dramatick performances; it will be fit however to enumerate them, and

<sup>1</sup> The *Wild Gallant* was brought on the stage February 5th, 1662-1663, and published 1669. 4to. Pepys mentions that he saw it performed February 23, 1663. "It was ill acted, and the play so poor a thing as ever I saw in my life." S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 24.

to take especial notice of those that are distinguished by any peculiarity intrinsick or concomitant; for the composition and fate of eight and twenty dramas include too much of a poetical life to be omitted.

In 1664 he published the "*Rival Ladies*,"<sup>1</sup> which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, a man of high reputation both as a writer and a statesman. In this play he made his essay of dramattick rhyme, which he defends in his dedication, with sufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was himself a writer of rhyming tragedies.<sup>2</sup>

He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the "*Indian Queen*,"<sup>3</sup> a tragedy in rhyme. The parts which either of them wrote are not distinguished.

The "*Indian Emperor*" was published in 1667. It is a tragedy in rhyme, intended for a sequel to Howard's "*Indian Queen*." Of this connection notice was given to the audience by printed bills, distributed at the door; an expedient supposed to be ridiculed in the "*Rehearsal*,"<sup>4</sup> when Bayes tells how many reams he has printed, to instill into the audience some conception of his plot.

In this play is the description of Night,<sup>5</sup> which Rymer<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 4th August, 1664. "To a Play at the King's house. *The Rival Ladies*, a very innocent and most pretty witty play. I was much pleased with it."—PEPYS.

18th July, 1666. "Walked to Woolwich, reading the *Rival Ladies* all the way."—PEPYS.

<sup>2</sup> His chief works were *Parthenissa*, a romance, 1650; *Mr. Anthony*, a comedy, 1690; *The Art of War*, 1677, &c., &c. His state letters were published with his *Life*, 1742.

<sup>3</sup> 27th January, 1663-1664. "To Covent Garden . . . in the way observing the street full of coaches at the new play of the *Indian Queen*, which for show they say exceeds *Henry VIII.*"—PEPYS.

<sup>4</sup> The Duke of Buckingham's farce, see p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> *The Indian Emperor*, act iii. sc. 2. S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 321. These lines are styled by Wordsworth, "vague, bombastic, and senseless." Supp. to Preface. *Works*, ed. 1857, vol. iii. p. 333.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Rymer (1638-1713), antiquary and critic. *Historio-*

was made famous by preferring it to those of all other poets.

The practice of making tragedies in rhyme was introduced soon after the Restoration, as it seems by the earl of Orrery,<sup>1</sup> in compliance with the opinion of Charles the second, who had formed his taste by the French theatre; and Dryden, who wrote, and made an inventory of, some that he wrote, only to please, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of versification he was more likely to secure others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted the master's preference. He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifest propriety, he seems to have grown ashamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramatick rhyme,<sup>2</sup> in confirmation of the preface to the Duke of Lerma," in which Sir Robert Howard had censured it.

In 1667, he published "*Annus Mirabilis*," the "*Year of Vonders*,"<sup>3</sup> which may be esteemed one of his most laborate works.

It is addressed to Sir Robert Howard<sup>4</sup> by a letter, which is not properly a dedication; and, writing to a poet, he has interspersed many critical observations, of which some are common, and some perhaps ventured without much consideration. He began, even now, to exercise the domination of conscious genius, by recommending his own per-

rapher to William III. His chief works are the *Fœdera* in fifteen volumes folio, being a collection of the public conventions, treaties, &c., of Great Britain with other Powers; *The Tragedies of the last age considered*, 1678. 8vo; and *A short view of Tragedy of the last age*, 1693. 4to. He also wrote some worthless tragedies. Macaulay called him the worst critic that ever lived" in his essay on Boswell's *Johnson*.

<sup>1</sup> John Boyle, Earl of Orrery. See his *Letters*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> 1666, an historical poem, published 1667. S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> Dryden subsequently married Sir Robert's sister Elizabeth.

formance: "I am satisfied that as the Prince and General [Expert and Monk] are incomparably the best subjects I ever had, so what I have written on them is much better than what I have performed on any other. As I have endeavoured to adorn my poem with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution."

It is written in quatrains, or heroick stanzas of four lines; a measure which he had learned from the "*Gondibert*"<sup>1</sup> of Davenant, and which he then thought the most majestick that the English language affords. Of this stanza he mentions the encumbrances, encreased as they were by the exactness which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very much his custom to recommend his works, by representation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have sufficiently considered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praise.

There seems to be in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden towards each other,<sup>2</sup> something that is not now easily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the earl of Orrery, had defended dramattick rhyme;<sup>3</sup> and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays,<sup>4</sup> had censured his opinion. Dryden vindicated himself in his "Dialogue on Dramattick Poetry;"<sup>5</sup> Howard, in his Preface to the "*Duke of Lerma*,"<sup>6</sup> animadverted on the Vindication; and Dryden, in a Preface to the "*Indian Emperor*,"<sup>7</sup> replied to the Animadversions with great asperity,

<sup>1</sup> *Gondibert*, an heroick poem, 1651. 12mo. By Sir William Davenant, *vid. supra*, p. 138 n. Scott thinks "few poems afford more instances of vigorous conception and even felicity of expression, than the neglected *Gondibert*." S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> See Malone, vol. i. p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> In 1664, S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> Published 1665.

<sup>5</sup> Published 1667. S. S. D. vol. xv. p. 283.

<sup>6</sup> Published 1668.

<sup>7</sup> Published also 1668, but later in the year. See S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 321.



and almost with contumely. The dedication<sup>1</sup> to this play is dated the year in which the "Annus Mirabilis" was published. Here appears a strange inconsistency; but Langbaine affords some help, by relating that the answer to Howard was not published in the first edition of the play, but was added when it was afterwards reprinted;<sup>2</sup> and as the "Duke of Lerma" did not appear till 1668, the same year,<sup>3</sup> in which the Dialogue was published, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He was now so much distinguished, that in 1668 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureat.<sup>4</sup> The salary of the laureat had been raised in favour of Jonson, by Charles the First, from an hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce of wine; a revenue in those days not inadequate to the conveniencies of life.

The same year<sup>5</sup> he published his Essay on Dramatick Poetry, an elegant and instructive dialogue; in which we are told by Prior, that the principal character is meant to represent the duke of Dorset.<sup>6</sup> This work seems to have given Addison a model for his Dialogues upon Medals.

"Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen," is a tragi-comedy.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To Anne, Duchess of Monmouth, Oct. 12, 1667. S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> See "Defence," S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> This should be "the year after."

<sup>4</sup> Dryden was not appointed till August, 1670. Malone gives the patent, which is expressed in the most honourable terms. Dryden was at the same time appointed Historiographer Royal, the salary of the two offices being £200 a year.

<sup>5</sup> This should be "the year before."

<sup>6</sup> "Duke" is a slip. It should be Earl of Dorset. *Vid. sup. Life of Dorset*, p. 314.

<sup>7</sup> Acted 1667. Published 1668. For an interesting account of this play, and of Nell Gwynn's acting in it, see Mr. Saintsbury. S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 416.

In the preface he discusses a curious question, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions: and determines very justly, that, of the plan and disposition, and all that can be reduced to principles of science, the author may depend upon his own opinion; but that, in those parts where fancy predominates, self-love may easily deceive. He might have observed, that what is good only because it pleases, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to please.

"Sir Martin Marall" is a comedy, published<sup>1</sup> without preface or dedication, and at first without the name of the author. Langbaine charges it, like most of the rest, with plagiarism; and observes that the song is translated from Voiture, allowing however that both the sense and measure are exactly observed.

"The Tempest"<sup>2</sup> is an alteration of Shakspeare's play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant, "whom," says he, "I found of so quick a fancy, that nothing was proposed to him in which he could not suddenly produce a thought extremely pleasant and surprising; and those first thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin proverb, were not always the least happy; and as his fancy was quick, so likewise were the products of it remote and new. He borrowed not of any other, and his imaginations were such as could not easily enter into any other man."

The effect produced by the conjunction of these two powerful minds was, that to Shakspeare's monster Caliban is added a sister-monster Sicorax; and a woman, who, in

<sup>1</sup> 1667. This play, which was partly written by the Duke of Newcastle, is said to be an imitation of Molière's *L'Etourdi*. See S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Acted November 7th, 1667. It is in the prologue to this play that the lines occur:—

"But Shakspeare's magic could not copied be;  
Within that circle none durst walk but he."

the original play, had never seen a man, is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never seen a woman.<sup>1</sup>

About this time, in 1673, Dryden seems to have had his quiet much disturbed by the success of the "Empress of Morocco," a tragedy<sup>2</sup> written in rhyme by *Elkanah Settle*;<sup>3</sup> which was so much applauded, as to make him think his supremacy of reputation in some danger. Settle had not only been prosperous on the stage, but, in the confidence of success, had published his play, with sculptures and a preface<sup>4</sup> of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the last blast of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the court-ladies.<sup>5</sup>

Dryden could not now repress these emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealousy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication such criticism as malignant impatience could pour out in haste.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Peter Cunningham here transposes several pages and paragraphs to suit the dates of the plays referred to, but it seems more proper to leave the text as Johnson left it, apprising the reader that the true dates are given in the notes, wherever they have been corrected since Johnson's time, as well as a chronological table. *Vid. infr.* p. 496.

<sup>2</sup> Published 1673. 4to. Beside the offences mentioned by Johnson, the price was two shillings, being double the ordinary charge, and the title announced *Elkanah Settle, Servant to His Majesty*, an addition more properly belonging to Dryden.

<sup>3</sup> "We have no city-poet now: that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was *Elkanah Settle*. There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling. Now *Elkanah Settle* sounds so queer, who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden, in preference to *Elkanah Settle*, from the names only, without knowing their different merits." Wilkes in Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iii. p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> The sneers of Dryden were in a dedication, not a preface.

<sup>5</sup> The Earl of Mulgrave contributing a Prologue on the first occasion, and the Earl of Rochester a Prologue on the second occasion of its being acted at court.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>6</sup> For an amusing account of these feuds and of *Elkanah Settle*, by Dennis, see *S. S. D.* vol. i. p. 156, and *Idler*, No. 12.



Of Settle he<sup>1</sup> gives this character. "He's an animal of a most deplored understanding, without conversation. His being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought, which he can never fashion into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent which he has, is fancy. He sometimes labours with a thought; but, with the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly still-born; so that, for want of learning and elocution, he will never be able to express any thing either naturally or justly!"<sup>2</sup>

This is not very decent; yet this is one of the pages in which criticism prevails most over brutal fury. He proceeds: "He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great felicity in writing nonsense for them. Fools they will be in spite of him. His King, his two Empresses, his villain, and his sub-villain, nay his hero, have all a certain natural cast of the father—their folly was born and bred in them, and something of the Elkanah will be visible."<sup>3</sup>

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withhold from the reader a particular remark. Having gone through the first act, he says, "To conclude this act with the most rumbling piece of nonsense spoken yet,

" 'To flattering lightning our feign'd smiles conform,  
Which back'd with thunder do but gild a storm.'

" *Conform a smile to lightning, make a smile imitate lightning, and flattering lightning: lightning sure is a threatening thing. And this lightning must gild a storm. Now if I must conform my smiles to lightning, then my smiles*

<sup>1</sup> "Dr. Johnson ascribes the whole of this piece to Dryden, and does not seem to have been apprized that a great part of it was written by Shadwell and Crowne." Malone, vol. ii. p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Remarks on the *Empress of Morocco*, S. D. vol. xv. p. 403.

<sup>3</sup> S. D. vol. xv. p. 404.



: gild a search for a girl with smiles a - the love  
of gilding. But girl a smile a smile a smile  
der. Thunder is not a the smile a the smile  
storm must be a the smile a the smile  
ing; as if a man would give a smile a smile  
ed, or having a smile a smile a smile a smile  
ing by comparing, smiling, smiling, smiling, smiling  
dering. The whole is a the smile a the smile  
e my convenient smiles a smile a the smile a smile  
e, which being taken with a smile a smile a smile  
battle. I am mistaken if I mistake a smile a smile  
k down. Sure the poet was not a smile a smile  
e smack is a smile a smile a smile a smile a smile  
lump of dried nonsense at once.  
ere is perhaps a sufficient specimen. But as the  
phlet, though I have a smile a smile a smile a smile  
epublication, and is not likely to be found in any  
ify curiosity to quote it more fully.

- Where'er she looks.

He no severer a punishment needs.

That dares pronounce the sentence of her death.

Than the infection that attends that breath."

at attends that breath.—The poet is at breath again:  
th can never 'scape him; and here he brings in a breath  
must be infectious with pronouncing a sentence: and  
sentence is not to be pronounced till the condemned  
y bleeds; that is, she must be executed first, and sen-  
ed after; and the pronouncing of this sentence will be  
tious; that is, others will catch the disease of that  
ence, and this infecting of others will torment a man's

The whole is thus; *when she bleeds, thou needest no  
ter hell or torment to thyself, than infecting of others by  
ouncing a sentence upon her.* What hodge-podge does  
nake here! Never was Dutch grout such clogging.

thick, indigestible stuff. But this is but a taste to stay the stomach; we shall have a more plentiful mess presently.

"Now to dish up the poet's broth, that I promised:

"For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarg'd,  
Of nature's grosser burden we're discharg'd,  
Then gently, as a happy lover's sigh,  
Like wandering meteors through the air we'll fly,  
And in our airy walk, as subtle guests,  
We'll steal into our cruel fathers breasts,  
There read their souls, and track each passion's sphere:  
See how Revenge moves there, Ambition here.  
And in their orbs view the dark characters  
Of sieges, ruins, murders, blood and wars.  
We'll blot out all those hideous draughts, and write  
Pure and white forms; then with a radiant light  
Their breasts encircle, till their passions be  
Gentle as nature in its infancy:  
Till soften'd by our charms their furies cease,  
And their revenge resolves into a peace.  
Thus by our death their quarrel ends,  
Whom living we made foes, dead we'll make friends."

"If this be not a very liberal mess, I will refer myself to the stomach of any moderate guest. And a rare mess it is, far excelling any Westminster white-broth. It is a kind of gibblet porridge, made of the gibblets of a couple of young geese, stodged full of *meteors, orbs, spheres, track, hideous draughts, dark characters, white forms, and radiant lights*, designed not only to please appetite, and indulge luxury; but it is also physical, being an approved medicine to purge choler: for it is propounded by Morena, as a receipt to cure their fathers of their choleric humours: and were it written in characters as barbarous as the words, might very well pass for a doctor's bill. To conclude, it is porridge, 'tis a receipt, 'tis a pig with a pudding in the belly, 'tis I know not what: for, certainly, never any one that pretended to write sense, had the impudence before to

put such stuff as this, into the mouths of those that were to speak it before an audience, whom he did not take to be all fools; and after that to print it too, and expose it to the examination of the world. But let us see, what we can make of this stuff:

“For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarg'd—”

“Here he tells us what it is to be *dead*; it is to have *our freed souls set free*. Now if to have a soul set free is to be dead, then to have a *freed soul* set free, is to have a dead man die.

“Then gentle, as a happy lover's sigh—”

“They two like one *sigh*, and that one *sigh* like two wandering meteors,

“—shall flie through the air—”

“That is, they shall mount above like falling stars, or else they shall skip like two Jacks with lanthorns, or Will with a wisp, and Madge with a candle.”

And in their airy walk steal into their cruel fathers breasts, like subtle guests. So “that their fathers breasts must be in an airy walk, an airy walk of a flier. And there they will read their souls, and track the spheres of their passions. That is, these walking fliers, Jack with a lanthorn, &c. will put on his spectacles, and fall a reading souls, and put on his pumps and fall a tracking of spheres; so that he will read and run, walk and fly at the same time! Oh! Nimble Jack. Then he will see, how revenge here, how ambition there—The birds will hop about. And then view the dark characters of sieges, ruins, murders, blood, and wars, in their orbs: Track the characters to their forms! Oh! rare sport for Jack. Never was place so full of game as these breasts! You cannot stir but flush a sphere, start a character, or un-kennel an orb!”

Settle's is said to have been the first play embellished

with sculptures; those ornaments seem to have given poor Dryden great disturbance. He tries however to ease his pain, by venting his malice in a parody.

“The poet has not only been so impudent to expose all this stuff, but so arrogant to defend it with an epistle; like a saucy booth-keeper, that, when he had put a cheat upon the people, would wrangle and fight with any that would not like it, or would offer to discover it; for which arrogance our poet receives this correction; and to jerk him a little the sharper, I will not transpose his verse, but by the help of his own words trans-non-sense sense, that, by my stuff, people may judge the better what his is:

“Great Boy, thy tragedy and sculptures done  
From press, and plates in fleets do homeward come:  
And in ridiculous and humble pride,  
Their course in ballad-singers baskets guide,  
Whose greasy twigs do all new beauties take,  
From the gay shews thy dainty sculptures make.  
Thy lines a mess of rhiming nonsense yield,  
A senseless tale, with flattering fustian fill'd.  
No grain of sense does in one line appear,  
Thy words big bulks of boisterous bombast bear.  
With noise they move, and from players mouths rebound,  
When their tongues dance to thy words empty sound.  
By thee inspir'd the rumbling verses roll,  
As if that rhyme and bombast lent a soul:  
And with that soul they seem taught duty too,  
To huffing words does humble nonsense bow,  
As if it would thy worthless worth enhance,  
To th' lowest rank of fops thy praise advance;  
To whom, by instinct, all thy stuff is dear;  
Their loud claps echo to the theatre.  
From breaths of fools thy commendation spreads,  
Fame sings thy praise with mouths of loggerheads.  
With noise and laughing each thy fustian greets,  
'Tis clapt by quires of empty-headed cits,  
Who have their tribute sent, and homage given,  
As men in whispers send loud noise to heaven.'



Thus I have daubed him with his own puddle: and we are come from aboard his dancing, masking, re-nding, breathing fleet; and as if we had landed at ham,<sup>1</sup> we meet nothing but fools and nonsense."<sup>2</sup>

Such was the criticism to which the genius of Dryden had to be reduced, between rage and terrour; rage with little vocation, and terrour with little danger. To see the best minds thus levelled with the meanest, may produce some solace to the consciousness of weakness, and some justification to the pride of wisdom. But let it be remembered, that minds are not levelled in their powers but when they are first levelled in their desires. Dryden and his contemporaries had both placed their happiness in the claps of flatterers.

The "Mock Astrologer,"<sup>3</sup> a comedy, is dedicated to the striaus duke<sup>4</sup> of Newcastle, whom he courts by adding to his praises those of his lady, not only as a lover but a patron of his studies. It is displeasing to think how many praises, once celebrated, are since forgotten. Of Newcastle's works nothing is now known but his treatise on horsemanship.<sup>5</sup>

Gotham is a village in Nottinghamshire, whose inhabitants, in the reign of King John, made a pretence of being fools to avoid fine and punishment. The amusing legend is given in Thoroton's *Hist. Notts.* i. p. 42.

S. D. vol. xv. p. 407. Scott, like Malone, gives only the preface and postscript, believing that Dryden did no more than revise the pamphlet and write these.

*An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer*, acted and published by S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 257.

William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, who distinguished himself in the civil wars of Charles I.

A splendid folio with engravings, in which, after his grace has been represented in every possible attitude and dress, he is at length depicted seated on Pegasus, and in the act of ascending from a circle of nymphs, kneeling round him in the act of adoration. S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 230.

The Preface seems very elaborately written, and contains many just remarks on the Fathers of the English drama. Shakspeare's plots, he says, are in the hundred novels of *Cinthio*; those of Beaumont and Fletcher in Spanish Stories; Jonson only made them for himself. His criticisms upon tragedy, comedy, and farce, are judicious and profound. He endeavours to defend the immorality of some of his comedies by the example of former writers; which is only to say, that he was not the first nor perhaps the greatest offender. Against those that accused him of plagiarism, he alleges a favourable expression of the king: "He only desired that they, who accuse me of thefts, would steal him plays like mine;" and then relates how much labour he spends in fitting for the English stage what he borrows from others.

"Tyrannic Love, or the Virgin Martyr,"<sup>1</sup> was another tragedy in rhyme, conspicuous for many passages of strength and elegance, and many of empty noise and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have been always the sport of criticism;<sup>2</sup> and were at length, if his own confession may be trusted, the shame of the writer.

Of this play he takes care to let the reader know, that it was contrived and written in seven weeks. Want of time was often his excuse, or perhaps shortness of time was his private boast in the form of an apology.

It was written before the "Conquest of Granada, but published after it. The design is to recommend piety. "I considered that pleasure was not the only end of poesy, and that even the instructions of morality were not so

<sup>1</sup> *Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr*, acted 1669, published 1670. See S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 369.

<sup>2</sup> "I remember some verses of my own, *Maximin and Almanzor*, which cry vengeance on me for their extravagance, and which I wish heartily in the same fire with *Statius and Chapman*." Dryden's Ded. to *Spanish Fryar*, S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 406.

wholly the business of a poet, as that precepts and examples of piety were to be omitted; for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to forget that religion was first taught in verse, which the laziness or dulness of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into prose."<sup>1</sup> Thus foolishly could Dryden write, rather than not shew his malice to the parsons.

The two parts of the "Conquest of Granada"<sup>2</sup> are written with a seeming determination to glut the public with dramatick wonders; to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantick heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without enquiring the cause, and loves in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity, and majestick madness: such as, if it is sometimes despised, is often revered, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing.<sup>3</sup>

In the Epilogue<sup>4</sup> to the second part of the "Conquest of Granada," Dryden indulges his favourite pleasure of discrediting his predecessors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long postscript. He had promised a second dialogue, in which he should more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets, who have written in the

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Tyrannic Love*, S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> This drama was brought out 1669-1670, but not printed till 1672. S. S. D. vol. iv. p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Nell Gwynne acted the character of Almahide, and spoke the Prologue in the famous broad-brimmed hat, which convulsed the king with laughter almost to suffocation. Ald. D. vol. i. p. xxx.

<sup>4</sup> Ald. D. vol. iii. p. 51.

dramatick, epick, or lyrick way. This promise was never formally performed; but, with respect to the dramatick writers, he has given us in his prefaces, and in this post-script, something equivalent; but his purpose being to exalt himself by the comparison, he shews faults distinctly, and only praises excellence in general terms.

A play thus written, in professed defiance of probability, naturally drew down upon itself the vultures of the theatre. One of the criticks that attacked it was *Martin Clifford*,<sup>1</sup> to whom *Sprat* addressed the "Life of Cowley," with such veneration of his critical powers as might naturally excite great expectations of instruction from his remarks. But let honest credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Clifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. *Percy*,<sup>2</sup> were at last obtained; and, that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to satisfy all reasonable desire.

In the first Letter his observation is only general: "You do live," says he, "in as much ignorance and darkness as you did in the womb: your writings are like a Jack-of-all trades shop; they have a variety, but nothing of value; and if thou art not the dullest plant-animal that ever the earth produced, all that I have conversed with are strangely mistaken in thee."

In the second, he tells him that *Almanzor* is not more copied from Achilles than from Ancient Pistol. "But I am," says he, "strangely mistaken if I have not seen this very *Almanzor* of yours in some disguise about this town, and passing under another name. Pr'ythee tell me true,

<sup>1</sup> Martin Clifford (died 1677), Master of the Charterhouse. He assisted the Duke of Buckingham in the production of the *Rehearsal*. The four letters containing his attack on Dryden were published in 1687. His portrait appears in the 8vo. ed. of Cowley's *Works*.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Percy (1728-1811), Dean of Carlisle and subsequently Bishop of Dromore. In 1765 he published his celebrated *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.



Was not this Huffcap once the *Indian Emperor*, and at another time did he not call himself *Mazimin*? Was not *Lyndaraza* once called *Almeira*? I mean under *Montezuma* the *Indian Emperor*. I protest and vow they are either the same, or so alike that I cannot, for my heart, distinguish one from the other. You are therefore a strange unconscionable thief; thou art not content to steal from others, but dost rob thy poor wretched self too."

Now was *Settle's* time to take his revenge. He wrote a vindication<sup>1</sup> of his own lines; and, if he is forced to yield any thing, makes reprisals upon his enemy. To say that his answer is equal to the censure, is no high commendation. To expose Dryden's method of analysing his expressions, he tries the same experiment upon the description of the ships in the *Indian Emperor*, of which however he does not deny the excellence; but intends to shew, that by studied misconstruction every thing may be equally represented as ridiculous. After so much of Dryden's elegant animadversions, justice requires that something of *Settle's* should be exhibited. The following observations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages:

"Fate after him below with pain did move,  
And victory could scarce keep pace above.'

"These two lines, if he can shew me any sense or thought in, or any thing but bombast and noise, he shall make me believe every word in his observations on "*Morocco*" sense.

"In the '*Empress of Morocco*' were these lines:

"I'll travel then to some remoter sphere,  
Till I find out new worlds, and crown you there.'

<sup>1</sup> *Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco, revised, with some few errata, to be printed instead of postscript with the next edition of the Conquest of Granada*, London, 1674, 4to. Re-issued in 1687 with a second title-page *Reflections on several of Mr. Dryden's Plays, particularly the first and second parts of the Conquest of Granada*. By E. Settle, gent, London, 4to.

"On which Dryden made this remark :

"*I believe our learned author takes a sphere for a country: the sphere of Morocco, as if Morocco were the globe of earth and water; but a globe is no sphere neither, by his leave.*' &c. So *sphere* must not be sense, unless it relate to a circular motion about a globe, in which sense the astronomers use it. I would desire him to expound those lines in 'Granada:'

"I'll to the turrets of the palace go,  
And add new fire to those that fight below.  
Thence, hero-like, with torches by my side,  
(Far be the omen tho') my Love I'll guide.  
No, like his better fortune I'll appear,  
With open arms, loose vail and flowing hair,  
Just flying forward from my rowling sphere.' }

I wonder, if he be so strict, how he dares make so bold with *sphere* himself, and be so critical in other men's writings. Fortune is fancied standing on a globe, not on a *sphere*, as he told us in the first Act.

"Because *Elkanah's 'Similies'* are the most unlike things to what they are compared in the world, I'll venture to start a simile in his '*Annus Mirabilis*:' he gives this poetical description of the ship<sup>1</sup> called the '*London*:'

"The goodly London in her gallant trim,  
The Phenix-daughter of the vanquish'd old,  
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,  
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.  
Her flag aloft spread ruffling in the wind,  
And sanguine streamers seem'd the flood to fire:  
The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,  
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

<sup>1</sup> "The old ship the '*London*,' one of the many of the Commonwealth, had been destroyed by fire, and the city of London now presented the king with a new ship, called '*The Loyal London*.' This second '*London*' was burnt before the end of the war, when the Dutch surprised Chatham in 1667."—A. MILNES.

With rocky decks, her guns of mighty strength,  
Whose low-laid muzzles each muzzling millow save,  
Deep in her draughts, and waiting in her length,  
She seems a sea-wasp flying in the waves.

What a wonderful power is here, to make all these poetical beautifications of a ship : what is a *galleon* in the first stanza, and but a *wasp* in the last : nay, to make his humble comparison of a *wasp* more ridiculous, he does not say it flies upon the waves as nimbly as a wasp, or the like, but it seemed a *wasp*. But our author at the writing of this was not in his altitudes, to compare ships to floating alaces ; a comparison to the purpose, was a perfection he did not arrive to, till his 'Indian Emperor's' days. But perhaps his similitude has more in it than we imagine : his ship had a great many guns in her, and they, put all together, made the sting in the wasp's tail : for this is all the reason I can guess, why it seem'd a *wasp*. But, because we will allow him all we can to help out, let it be a *henix sea-wasp*, and the rarity of such an animal may do much towards the heightening the fancy.

"It had been much more to his purpose, if he had designed to render the senseless play little, to have searched for some such pedantry as this :

" 'Two ifs scarce make one possibility.  
If justice will take all and nothing give,  
Justice, methinks, is not distributive.  
To die or kill you, is the alternative,  
Rather than take your life, I will not live.'

"Observe, how prettily our author chops logick in roick verse. Three such fustian canting words as *distributive*, *alternative*, and *two ifs*, no man but himself would ever come within the noise of. But he's a man of general learning, and all comes into his play.

"'Twould have done well too, if he could have met with a third or two, worth the observation : such as,

"Move swiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace,  
Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy race."

"But surely the Sun, whether he flies a lover's or not a lover's pace, leaves weeks and months, nay years too, behind him in his race.

"Poor Robin,"<sup>1</sup> or any other of the Philomathematicks, would have given him satisfaction in the point.

"If I could kill thee now, thy fate's so low,  
That I must stoop, ere I can give the blow.  
But mine is fixt so far above thy crown,  
That all thy men,  
Piled on thy back, can never pull it down."

"Now where that is, Almanzor's fate is fixt, I cannot guess; but wherever it is, I believe Almanzor, and think that all Abdalla's subjects, piled upon one another, might not pull down his fate so well as without piling: besides, I think Abdalla so wise a man, that if Almanzor had told him piling his men upon his back might do the feat, he would scarce bear such a weight, for the pleasure of the exploit; but it is a huff, and let Abdalla do it if he dare.

<sup>1</sup> "Poor Robin" is a pseudonym which has been used by different writers. The allusion here is to William Winstanley's *An Almanack after a new fashion written by Poor Robin, Knight of the Burnt Island, a well wisher to the Mathematicks*, &c., 1677, 8vo., and *Poor Robin's Book of Knowledge, showing the effects of the Planets, Receipts for Curing Distempers*, &c. &c., by the Study of 21 years of Poor Robin, a Well-wisher to the Mathematicks. Will. Winstanley was a barber in the time of Charles I. and II. and James II. He is best known from his *England's Worthies, Select Lives of the most eminent persons from Constantine the Great to the death of Oliver Cromwell, late Protector*. He republished this book in 1687, revised and curiously altered to suit the times. This is a wretched compilation, and, according to Chalmers, is largely borrowed from the *Theatrum Poetarum* of E. Philips; but there is a very curious copy of it in the British Museum, interleaved and full of MSS. notes by Philip Bliss, Dr. Percy, and J. H., interspersed with newspaper cuttings, advertisements, &c., &c.



“ ‘The people like a headlong torrent go,  
And every dam they break or overflow.  
But, unoppos’d, they either lose their force,  
Or wind in volumes to their former course.’

very pretty allusion, contrary to all sense or reason. rents, I take it, let them wind never so much, can never rn to their former course, unless he can suppose that tains can go upwards, which is impossible: nay more, he foregoing page he tells us so too. A trick of a r unfaithful memory,

“ ‘But can no more than fountains upward flow.’

Which of a *torrent*, which signifies a rapid stream, is h more impossible. Besides, if he goes to quibble, and that it is possible by art water may be made return, the same water run twice in one and the same channel: he quite confutes what he says; for, it is by being osed, that it runs into its former course: for all engines : make water so return, do it by compulsion and oppo- on. Or, if he means a headlong torrent for a tide, ch would be ridiculous, yet they do not wind in volumes, come fore-right back (if their upright lies straight to r former course), and that by opposition of the sea- er, that drives them back again.

And for fancy, when he lights of any thing like it, ’tis onder if it be not borrowed. As here, for example of, ad this fanciful thought in his ‘*Ann. Mirab.*’<sup>1</sup>

“ ‘Old father Thames raised up his reverend head;  
But feared the fate of Simoeis would return;  
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed;  
And shrunk his waters back into his urn.’

his is stolen from Cowley’s ‘*Davideis*,’ p. 9.

<sup>1</sup> Line 926, *Ald. D.* vol. i. p. 93.

"Swift Jordan started, and strait backward fled,  
Hiding amongst thick reeds his aged head.  
And when the Spaniards their assault begin,  
At once beat those without and those within."

"This Almanzor speaks of himself; and sure for one man to conquer an army within the city, and another without the city, at once, is something difficult; but this flight is pardonable, to some we meet with in 'Granada.' Osmin, speaking of Almanzor:

"Who, like a tempest that outrides the wind,  
Made a just battle, ere the bodies joined."

"Pray what does this honourable person mean by a *tempest that outrides the wind*? A tempest that outrides itself. To suppose a tempest without wind, is as bad as supposing a man to walk without feet; for if he supposes the tempest to be something distinct from the wind, yet as being the effect of wind only, to come before the cause is a little preposterous: so that, if he takes it one way, or if he takes it the other, those two *ifs* will scarce make one *possibility*." Enough of Settle.

"Marriage Alamode"<sup>1</sup> is a comedy, dedicated to the Earl of Rochester; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but the promoter of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The earl of Rochester therefore was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always represents as an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with some disrespect in the preface to "Juvenal."<sup>2</sup>

"The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery,"<sup>3</sup> a comedy, was driven off the stage, *against the opinion*, as the author

<sup>1</sup> First acted and printed 1673. See S. S. D. vol. iv. p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> S. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Acted in 1672. Printed in 1673. S. S. D. vol. iv. p. 365.

says, of the best judges. It is dedicated, in a very elegant address, to Sir Charles Sedley;<sup>1</sup> in which he finds an opportunity for his usual complaint of hard treatment and unreasonable censure.

"Amboyna"<sup>2</sup> is a tissue of mingled dialogue in verse and prose, and was perhaps written in less time than "The Virgin Martyr;"<sup>3</sup> though the author thought not fit either ostentatiously or mournfully to tell how little labour it cost him, or at how short a warning he produced it. It was a temporary performance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation against their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his Epilogue, to make his poetry not less destructive than that by which Tyrtæus<sup>4</sup> of old animated the Spartans. This play was written in the second Dutch war in 1673.

"Troilus and Cressida,"<sup>5</sup> is a play altered from Shakespeare; but so altered that even in Langbaine's opinion, *the last scene in the third act is a masterpiece*. It is introduced by a discourse on *the grounds of criticism in tragedy*; to which I suspect that Rymer's book<sup>6</sup> had given occasion.

The "Spanish Fryar" is a tragi-comedy,<sup>7</sup> eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written against the Papists, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies; and partly by the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Sidley (as Malone says the name was then written) was one of "the three most eminent wits of that time" (1668). Burnet, *Hist. of his Own Time*, vol. i. p. 368, 8vo, 1753.

<sup>2</sup> Acted and printed 1673. *Ibid.* vol. v. p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> This should be *The Royal Martyr*.

<sup>4</sup> See Grote's *Hist. Greece*, vol. ii. p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> Published 1679. S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 241.

<sup>6</sup> *Tragedies of the last age considered and examined*, Lond. 1678, 8vo.

<sup>7</sup> This was the only drama prohibited by James II. after his accession; and singularly enough, it was the first play represented by order of Queen Mary after the Revolution, and honoured with her presence. It was brought out in 1681. S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 393, Ald. D. vol. i. p. xlviii.



popularity which it obtained at first, and partly by the real power both of the serious and risible part, it continued long a favourite of the publick.

It was Dryden's opinion, at least for some time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comick and tragick scenes, and that it is necessary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the pressure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilsome passions. "Whoever," says he,<sup>1</sup> "cannot perform both parts, is but half a writer for the stage."

The "Duke of Guise,"<sup>2</sup> a tragedy written in conjunction with Lee,<sup>3</sup> as "Oedipus" had been before, seems to deserve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the court, who attacked him with great violence, and were answered by him; though at last he seems to withdraw from the conflict, by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play; and he happened, says Dryden, to claim the promise just upon the finishing of a poem, when he would have been glad of a little respite.—Two thirds of it belonged to him; and to me only the first scene of the play, the whole fourth act, and the first half or somewhat more of the fifth.<sup>4</sup>

This was a play written professedly for the party of the duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers of France and

<sup>1</sup> S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 410.

<sup>2</sup> Acted and printed 1683. S. S. D. vol. vii. p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Lee (1657-1692), a dramatic poet, of whose thirteen tragedies *Alexander the Great* is the best known.—MATT. ARNOLD.

<sup>4</sup> *Vindication of the Duke of Guise*, pub. 1683, S. S. D. vol. vii. p. 149. The poem Dryden speaks of "finishing" is supposed to have been the *Religio Laici*, pub. Nov. 1682.



Covenanters of England; and this intention produced controversy.

"Albion and Albanus"<sup>1</sup> is a musical drama or opera, written, like the "Duke of Guise," against the Republicans. With what success it was performed, I have not found.

"The State of Innocence and Fall of Man" is termed by him an opera:<sup>2</sup> it is rather a tragedy in heroick rhyme, of which the personages are such as cannot decently be exhibited on the stage. Some such production was seen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milton:

"Or if a work so infinite be spann'd,  
Jealous I was least some less skilful hand,  
Such as disquiet always what is well,  
And by ill-imitating would excel,  
Might hence presume the whole creation's day,  
To change in scenes, and show it in a play."<sup>3</sup>

This is another of his hasty productions; for the heat of his imagination raised it in a month.

This composition is addressed to the princess of Modena, then dutchess of York, in a strain of flattery which discards genius, and which it was wonderful that any man who knew the meaning of his own words, could use without self-detestation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praising human excellence in the language of religion.

The preface contains an apology for heroick verse, and poetick licence; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the use of bold notions and ambitious figures.

<sup>1</sup> This play was being performed for the sixth time June 13th, 1685, when an express brought the news of Monmouth's landing. It was printed in the same year. S. S. D. vol. vii. p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Pub. 1674. It has been supposed that the origin of this play was the Italian mystery, the *Adamo of Andreini*. See Masson's *Milton*, vol. i. bk. iii. ch. ii.

<sup>3</sup> On *Paradise Lost*, line 17. Grosart's ed. *Marvel*, 1872, vol. i. p. 146.

The reason which he gives for printing what was never acted, cannot be overpassed: "I was induced to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of it being dispersed abroad without my knowledge or consent, and every one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against me."<sup>1</sup> These copies as they gathered faults were apparently manuscript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be transcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not seek an apology in falsehood; but he that could bear to write the dedication felt no pain in writing the preface.

"Aureng Zebe"<sup>2</sup> is a tragedy founded on the actions of a great prince then reigning, but over nations not likely to employ their criticks upon the transactions of the English stage. If he had known and disliked his own character, our trade was not in those times secure from his resentment. His country is at such a distance, that the manners might be safely falsified, and the incidents feigned; for remoteness of place is remarked by Racine, to afford the same conveniences to a poet as length of time.

This play is written in rhyme; and has the appearance of being the most elaborate of all the dramas. The personages are imperial; but the dialogue is often domestick, and therefore susceptible of sentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The complaint of life<sup>3</sup> is celebrated.

<sup>1</sup> S. S. D. vol. v. p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Aurung Zebe, or the Great Mogul*, was acted 1675 and printed 1676.

<sup>3</sup> "When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;  
Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit;  
Trust on and think to-morrow will repay:  
To-morrow's false than the former day;  
Lies worse, and while it says we shall be blest  
With some new joys, cuts off what we possess."

S. S. D. vol. v. p. 258. Quoted by Boswell, vol. iv. p. 222.

There are many other passages that may be read with assurance.

This play is addressed to the earl of Mulgrave, afterwards duke of Buckingham, himself, if not a poet, yet a writer of verses, and a critick. In this address Dryden gives the first hints of his intention to write an epick poem. He mentions his design in terms so obscure, that he seems afraid lest his plan should be purloined, as, he says, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to "Juvenal." "The design," says he,<sup>1</sup> "you know is great, the story English, and neither too near the present times, nor too distant from them."

"All for Love, or the World well lost,"<sup>2</sup> a tragedy founded upon the story of "Antony and Cleopatra," he tells us, is the only play which he wrote for himself; the rest are given to the people. It is by universal consent accounted the work in which he has admitted the fewest improprieties of style or character; but it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that by admitting the romantick omnipotence of Love, he has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation that conduct which, through all ages, the good have censured as vicious, and the bad despised as foolish.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common topics of malicious and ignorant criticism, and without any particular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deservedly celebrated for their elegance and spriteliness.

"Limberham, or the kind Keeper,"<sup>3</sup> is a comedy, which,

S. S. D. vol. v. p. 196.

Acted and printed 1678. S. S. D. vol. v. p. 305. The title is noteworthy, *All for Love; or the World well Lost, a Tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre Royal, and written in imitation of Shakespeare's style.* John Dryden, servant to his Majesty.

S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 1.



after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the stage. What gave offence, was in the printing, as the author says, altered or omitted. Dryden confesses that its indecency was objected to; but Langbaine, who yet seldom favours him, imputes its expulsion to resentment, because *it so much exposed the keeping part of the town.*

"Oedipus"<sup>1</sup> is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the scenes, and composed the first and third acts.

"Don Sebastian"<sup>2</sup> is commonly esteemed either the first or second of his dramattick performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many incidents; and though it is not without sallies of frantick dignity, and more noise than meaning, yet as it makes approaches to the possibilities of real life, and has some sentiments which leave a strong impression, it continued long to attract attention. Amidst the distresses of princes, and the vicissitudes of empire, are inserted several scenes which the writer intended for comick; but which, I suppose, that age did not much commend, and this would not endure. There are, however, passages of excellence universally acknowledged; the dispute and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebastian has always been admired.

This play was first acted in 1690, after Dryden had for some years discontinued dramattick poetry.

"Amphitryon"<sup>3</sup> is a comedy derived from Plautus and Moliere. The dedication is dated Oct. 1690. This play seems to have succeeded at its first appearance; and was, I think, long considered as a very diverting entertainment.

"Cleomenes"<sup>4</sup> is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occa-

<sup>1</sup> Acted 1678, printed 1679. S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Acted and printed 1690. S. S. D. vol. vii. p. 285.

<sup>3</sup> Acted and printed 1690. S. S. D. vol. viii. p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Acted and published 1692. S. S. D. vol. viii. p. 202.



oned an incident related in the "Guardian" (No. 45), and allusively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the representation, he was accosted thus by the airy stripling: *Had I been left alone with a young lady, I would not have spent my time like your Spartan.* *What, Sir,* said Dryden, *perhaps is true; but give me leave to tell you, that you are no hero.*

"King Arthur" is another opera.<sup>1</sup> It was the last work at Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to see it exhibited; and it does not seem to have been ever brought upon the stage.<sup>2</sup> In the dedication to the marquis of Halifax, there is a very elegant character of Charles, and a pleasing account of his latter life. When this was first brought upon the stage, news that the duke of Monmouth had landed was told in the theatre, upon which the company departed, and "Arthur" was exhibited no more.<sup>3</sup>

His last drama was "Love triumphant," a tragi-comedy. In his dedication to the earl of Salisbury he mentions *the weakness of fortune to which he has voluntarily reduced himself, and of which he has no reason to be ashamed.*

This play appeared in 1694.<sup>4</sup> It is said to have been unsuccessful. The catastrophe, proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confessed by the author to be defective. Thus he began and ended his dramatick labours with ill success.

From such a number of theatrical pieces it will be supposed, by most readers, that he must have improved his

<sup>1</sup> Acted and published 1691. S. S. D. vol. viii. p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> This clause of the sentence is evidently printed by mistake.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. P. Cunningham points out that this circumstance is related by Johnson of the wrong play. It occurred during the representation of *Ion and Albanus* (1685). See Downes' *Roscius Anglicanus*, 12mo, 1808, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> See Evelyn's *Diary*, Jan. 11, 1693-4.

fortune; at least, that such diligence with such abilities must have set penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that universal approbation which it has now obtained. The playhouse was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by those who desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would have debased his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in those mansions of dissolute licentiousness. The profits of the theatre, when so many classes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great; and the poet had for a long time but a single night. The first that had two nights was *Southern*,<sup>1</sup> and the first that had three was *Rowe*.<sup>2</sup> There were however, in those days, arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practise; and a play therefore seldom produced him more than a hundred pounds.

<sup>1</sup> Born 1660, was only twenty-two when his first play was acted. He wrote, to support the court party, *The Loyal Brother*, intended to be taken as a compliment to the Duke of York. Cf. p. 30, l. 5, where Dryden addresses him as "Young man." He it was who finished *Cleomenes* for Dryden; and in 1696 he wrote *Oroonoko*, a play founded on the novel of the same name by Afra Behn, and intended as an attack on slavery.—A. MILNES.

*Southerne* was Pope's

"Tom, whom heaven sent down to raise  
The price of Prologues and of Plays."

Globe ed. *Pope*, p. 501.

<sup>2</sup> Shadwell received £130 for the *third day* of the *Squire of Alsatia* (Downes, p. 41), who adds, "which was the greatest receipt they ever had at Drury Lane at single prices." Southerne, in his dedication to *Sir Antony Love* (1691), records his interest in the third and sixth representations. Farquhar, in the preface to his *Inconstant* (1702), speaks of his sixth night; and Pope commemorates in the *Dunciad* "warm third days," and "thin third days." A "warm" third night cleared about sixty guineas. The "Dedication" seldom brought more than the customary fee of twenty guineas, and the highest copy money for a play received by Dryden appears to have been thirty guineas. This he had in 1692 for *Cleomenes*.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

y the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy.

Almost every piece had a dedication, written with such elegance and luxuriance of praise, as neither haughtiness or avarice could be imagined able to resist. But he seems to have made flattery too cheap. That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known.

To increase the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticism; a kind of learning then almost new in the English language, and which he, who had considered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to distribute copiously as occasions arose. By these dissertations the publick judgment must have been much improved; and Swift, who conversed with Dryden, relates<sup>1</sup> that he regretted the success of his own instructions, and found his readers made suddenly too silly to be easily satisfied.

His prologues had such reputation, that for some time a play was considered as less likely to be well received, if some of his verses did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till being asked to write one for Mr. Southern, he demanded three; *Not*, said he, *young man, out of disrespect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap.*

Though he declares, that in his own opinion his genius was not dramatick, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is said to have engaged, by contract, to furnish four plays a year.<sup>2</sup>

It is certain that in one year, 1678, he published "All for Love," "Assignation," two parts of the "Conquest of

<sup>1</sup> On this passage, and for the relationship between Dryden and Swift, see Malone's *Life of Dryden*, vol. i. pp. 238-240.

<sup>2</sup> From the *Memorial from the King's Players*, given by Malone, p. 73-75, it seems the contract was for three plays a year, and even this he did not fulfil.

It is said likewise that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be.

Much of the personal satire, to which it might owe its first reception, is now lost or obscured. *Bayes* probably imitated the dress, and mimicked the manner<sup>1</sup> of Dryden; the cant words which are so often in his mouth may be supposed to have been Dryden's habitual phrases, or customary exclamations. *Bayes*, when he is to write, is blooded and purged: this, as Lamotte<sup>2</sup> relates himself to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other strokes in the "Rehearsal" by which malice was gratified: the debate between Love and Honour, which keeps prince *Volscius* in a single boot,<sup>3</sup> is said to have alluded to the misconduct of the duke of Ormond, who lost Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a mistress.

The earl of Rochester, to suppress the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to persuade the publick that its approbation had been to that time misplaced. Settle was a while in high reputation: his "Empress of Morocco," having first delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the court. Now was the poetical meteor at the highest; the next moment began its fall. Rochester with-

<sup>1</sup> "It is incredible what pains Buckingham took with one of the actors, to teach him to speak some passages in *Bayes'* part in the *Rehearsal* right." Dean Lockier in *Spence's Anecdotes*, p. 63, ed. 1820.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Milne states that he has searched diligently, but in vain, for this passage in Charles Lamotte's *Essay on Poetry and Painting with relation to History*, 1730.

<sup>3</sup> This is an allusion to a comical scene in *The Rehearsal*, act iii. sc. 2, in which Prince *Volscius* falls in love while pulling on his boots. After debating whether he should yield to the commands of honour, and put on both boots, or to love, urging him to put on neither, he finally hops away in one. See Arber's Reprint, p. 87.



rew his patronage; seeming resolved, says one of his biographers, *to have a judgement contrary to that of the town.* Perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himself contributed to raise it.

Neither critics nor rivals did Dryden much mischief, unless they gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, which his frequent bursts of resentment give reason to suspect. He is always angry at some past, or afraid of some future censure; but he lessens the smart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the shafts of criticism by opposing a shield of adamant confidence.

The perpetual accusation produced against him, was that of plagiarism, against which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for, though he was perhaps sometimes unjustly censured, he would by denying part of the charge have confessed the rest; and as his adversaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power against facts, wisely left in that perplexity which generality produces a question which it was his interest to suppress, and which, unless provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five to sixty-three, may be supposed to have been sufficiently busied by the composition of eight and twenty pieces for the stage, Dryden found room in the same space for many other undertakings.

But, how much soever he wrote, he was at least once suspected of writing more; for in 1679 a paper of verses, called "an Essay on Satire,"<sup>1</sup> was shewn about in manuscript, by which the earl of Rochester, the dutchess of Ports-

<sup>1</sup> *Vid. infr.* vol. ii. *Life of Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire*, who was the author of the verses, and who intrusted to Dryden the task of revising them. Ald. D. vol. i. xlv.

mouth, and others, were so much provoked, that, as was supposed, for the actors were never discovered, they procured Dryden, whom they suspected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the duke of Buckinghamshire, the true writer, in his "Art of Poetry;" where he says of Dryden,

"Though prais'd and beaten for another's rhymes,  
His own deserves as great applause sometimes."

His reputation in time was such, that his name was thought necessary to the success of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute something, whatever it might be, to many publications. He prefixed the "Life of Polybius" to the translation of Sir Henry Sheers;<sup>1</sup> and those of Lucian and Plutarch to versions of their works by different hands. Of the English "Tacitus" he translated the first book; and, if Gordon be credited, translated it from the French.<sup>2</sup> Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without some degree of indignation; but it is not, I suppose, so much to be inferred that Dryden wanted the literature necessary to the perusal of "Tacitus," as that, considering himself as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the publick; and writing merely for money, was contented to get it by the nearest way.

In 1680, the "Epistles of Ovid" being translated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was

<sup>1</sup> *The History of Polybius the Megalopolitan*, prefixed to Sheers' translation, 1693. Sir Henry Sheers is said by Malone to have been a soldier.

<sup>2</sup> "Dryden has translated the first book: but has done it almost literally from M. Amelot de la Houssaye, with so much haste and little exactness that, beside his many mistakes, he has introduced several Gallicisms,"—"at best it is only the French translator ill-translated or ill-imitated." *Trans. Tacitus*, T. Gordon, Dublin, 1728, pp. 2-3.

necessary to introduce into it a preface, and it was who on such occasion was permitted to introduce a preface, a discourse upon translation, which was then straggled in the library, and it was not until 1701 that it was finally introduced. It was not until 1701 that it was finally introduced, which must for ever remain in the library, and it was not until 1701 that it was finally introduced, which must for ever remain in the library, and it was not until 1701 that it was finally introduced, which must for ever remain in the library.

In 1661, Evelyn became very much conspicuous in writing polemics with poetry in the periodical paper called "Abraham and Achitophel," written against the faction which by Lord Shaftesbury's management, set the Duke of Monmouth at the head.

Of this poem it would be tedious to say more, as it was applied to the support of public principles, and it would therefore every mind was interested, the reception was eager, and the

<sup>1</sup> Sandys (George, seventh and youngest son of the Archbishop of York (1577-1643). His works comprise *Sandys' Travels*, published 1615, fol.; of which there have been eight or ten editions. *Travels of Ortelius Metamorphosed*, 1632. *Paraphrase of the Psalms of David*, 1636, &c. &c. Watson thinks Sandys did more to polish and turn the English language than Leeman and Walker and his prose is thought finer than his verse.

<sup>2</sup> Barren Holroyde, D.D. 1591-1601, translator of Evelyn and Prynne, author of *A Survey of the World*, 1661, &c., &c.

<sup>3</sup> S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 166. This poem *Aid*, I. vol. i. p. 125 was read with such avidity that the first edition was sold in about a month, and the second was issued before the end of December. Two or three other editions of this poem were published in 1661, and in 1680 a fifth edition appeared in our author's *Miscellaneous Poems*, 1680, p. 10. Cunningham adds that a seventh edition, augmented, was published in 1692, and a tenth in folio, 1761.

sale so large, that my father,<sup>1</sup> an old bookseller, told me, he had not known it equalled but by *Sacheverell's* trial.<sup>2</sup>

The reason of this general perusal Addison has attempted to derive from the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets; and thinks that curiosity to decypher the names procured readers to the poem. There is no need to enquire why those verses were read, which, to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the co-operation of all the factious passions, and filled every mind with triumph or resentment.<sup>3</sup>

It could not be supposed that all the provocation given by Dryden would be endured without resistance or reply. Both his person and his party were exposed in their turns to the shafts of satire, which, though neither so well

<sup>1</sup> Michael Johnson, bookseller, of Lichfield, who according to a tradition of the town, carried his boy Samuel on his shoulder to hear the renowned Sacheverell preach. See Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. i. p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Sacheverell's trial*. In the year 1709 the struggle was at its height between Harley and the adherents of Marlborough. The queen, favouring Harley, had been obliged to give way, and Harley had been dismissed from his office of Secretary of State. But he only waited a chance to return, having with him both the royal favour and the popular feeling. Just at this juncture Dr. Sacheverell preached, on Nov. 5, before the Lord Mayor and aldermen, a sermon, at St. Paul's, in which he attacked the ministry in the most violent terms. The sermon was printed and 40,000 copies sold in a few weeks. The ministry impeached him and he was tried in Westminster Hall. But this drew out such a great popular manifestation in his favour that the queen felt strong enough gradually to effect the changes in the ministry she had long desired. Johnson must intend to allude to the sale of the sermon when he speaks of the sale of the trial, for though the trial was printed, and contained the speech in defence spoken by Sacheverell, and supposed to have been composed for him by bishop Atterbury, there is no record, as in the case of the sermon, of any very enormous sale. Cf. *Life of Pope*, p. 166, l. 8, and note.—A. MILNES.

<sup>3</sup> "The greatest of his satires . . . The spontaneous ease of expression, the rapid transitions, the general elasticity and movement, have never been excelled." Hallam, *Literature*, vol. iii. p. 473.



er called "The Medal reversed,"<sup>1</sup> with so much success in both encounters, that he left the palm doubtful, divided the suffrages of the nation. Such are the solutions of fame, or such is the prevalence of fashion, that the man whose works have not yet been thought to deserve the care of collecting them; who died forgotten in a hospital; and whose latter years were spent in contriving shows for fairs, and carrying an elegy or epithalamium, of which the beginning and end were occasionally varied, without the intermediate parts were always the same, to every house where there was a funeral or a wedding; might, with truth, have had inscribed upon his stone,

"Here lies the Rival and Antagonist of Dryden."

Settle was, for this rebellion, severely chastised by Dryden under the name of *Doeg*, in the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel,"<sup>2</sup> and was perhaps for his factious audacity made the city poet, whose annual office was to describe the glories of the Mayor's day. Of these bards he was the last, and seems not much to have deserved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions; for he afterwards wrote a panegyrick on the virtues of judge Jefferies,<sup>3</sup> and what more could have been done by the meanest zealot for prerogative?

Of translated fragments, or occasional poems, to enumerate the titles, or settle the dates would be tedious, with

<sup>1</sup> *The Medal Reversed, a Satyre against Persecution*, by the Author of *Azaria and Hushai*, Samuel Pordage (not Settle). Johnson does not notice the brutal attack on Dryden by Shadwell in *The Medal of John Bayes: A Satyr against Folly and Knavery*. 1682. 4to. See Malone, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> The greater portion of the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* was written by Nahum Tate. Malone, vol. i. p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> The notorious Chief-Justice, who in the "Bloody Circuit" of 1683, hanged 350 rebels, sold 800 into slavery beyond the sea, and by his infamous sentences on women left his name a by-word for cruelty.

little use. It may be observed, that as Dryden's genius was commonly excited by some personal regard, he rarely writes upon a general topick.

Soon after the accession of king James, when the design of reconciling the nation to the church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himself a convert to popery. This at any other time might have passed with little censure. Sir *Kenelm Digby*<sup>1</sup> embraced Popery; the two *Rainolds*<sup>2</sup> reciprocally converted one another; and *Chillingworth*<sup>3</sup> himself was a while so entangled in the wilds of controversy, as to retire for quiet to an infallible church. If men of argument and study can find such difficulties, or such motives, as may either unite them to the church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who perhaps never enquired why he was a protestant, should by an artful and experienced disputant be made a papist, overborn by the sudden violence of new and unexpected argu-

<sup>1</sup> *Vid. sup.* p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. John Rainolds (1549-1607), was one of the most learned and eminent divines of the sixteenth century. He was a scholar of Corpus Christi, Oxford, and afterwards Lecturer on Aristotle. Scaliger regrets his death as a loss to all Protestant Churches. Wood calls him "a man of infinite reading, and of a vast memory." William Rainolds, his brother, died in 1599. They were educated, one in the Church of Rome, the other in the Protestant communion, and were said to have converted each other in the course of disputation. See Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. i. p. 554.

<sup>3</sup> Chillingworth (1602-1644). Falling into the hands of the Jesuits he became a Papist, but after a few years returned to the Church of England. Of the controversial works of this celebrated Royalist divine, the most important and the most popular was *The religion of Protestants a safe way to Salvation*, the first edition being published in Oxford, 1638, in folio, the second in London within five months. Locke recommended the study of Chillingworth, as teaching both perspicuity and the right way of reasoning, and Tillotson called him "that incomparable person, the glory of the age and nation."

and, and what you was master to settle their affairs  
lingfleet.

With hopes of procuring a new and more complete  
ulate *Manitoury*: "History of the League" was  
published with a large introduction. The name of the  
is prefixed to the English "Life of Thomas Brown".  
I know not what he ever wrote, except the "History"  
haps the use of his name was a little more than a  
r seems not to have had much effect. Of course, in the  
ks, I believe, was ever popular.

The version of *Manitoury's* Life is commended to be  
a pamphlet not written in French and the version of  
s said to have been that the "Journal" which she is based  
on, made vows to him as her literary saint.

He was supposed to have undertaken to translate  
las's "History of France" and when it was published

<sup>1</sup> Dryden's share in the defence seems to have been the third, namely, a  
defence of the paper by Anne Hyde, Duchess of York. See *Review*  
*the Hind and Panther*, S. S. D. vol. x, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester 1633-1695, a famous  
line, a colleague of Tillotson, and an opponent of Locke.

<sup>3</sup> *Histoire de la ligue*, by Louis Manitoury, a celebrated Jesuit  
160-1686), the author of several religious histories. This one, trans-  
lated by Dryden in 1684, during the lifetime, therefore, of Charles II.,  
contains some original and curious pieces, amongst others the act of  
association of the Great Powers against the house of Bourbon. A spec-  
imen of this work is given (an account of the barricades of Paris),  
D. vol. xvii. This translation was dedicated to Charles II., and is  
said to have been undertaken at his express desire. See Malone, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> Translated from the French of Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702),  
known as the author of *Manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages*  
*esprit*, which has often been reprinted.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Brown, "of facetious memory," as Addison says, died  
14. His works "serious and comical" were published 1707, and  
ched a ninth edition in 1760. He himself published in 1702 *Mus-*  
*anea Aulica*, or a Collection of State Treatises never before  
lished.

Remarks upon it, to have written an *Answer*; <sup>1</sup> upon which Burnet makes the following observation:

"I have been informed from England, that a gentleman, who is famous both for poetry and several other things, had spent three months in translating M. Varillas's History; but that, as soon as my Reflections appeared, he discontinued his labour, finding the credit of his author was gone. Now, if he thinks it is recovered by his Answer, he will perhaps go on with his translation; and this may be, for aught I know, as good an entertainment for him as the conversation that he had set on between the Hinds and Panthers, and all the rest of animals, for whom M. Varillas may serve well enough as an author: and this history and that poem are such extraordinary things of their kind, that it will be but suitable to see the author of the worst poem become likewise the translator of the worst history that the age has produced. If his grace and his wit improve both proportionably, he will hardly find that he has gained much by the change he has made, from having no religion to chuse one of the worst. It is true, he had somewhat to sink from in matter of wit; but as for his morals, it is scarce possible for him to grow a worse man than he was. He has lately wreaked his malice on me for spoiling his three months labour; but in it he has done me all the honour that any man can receive from him, which is to be railed at by him. If I had ill-nature enough to prompt me to wish a very bad wish for him, it should be, that he would go on and finish his translation. By that it will appear, whether the English nation, which is the most competent judge in this matter, has, upon the seeing of the debate, pronounced in M. Varillas's favour, or in mine. If it is true, Mr. D. will suffer a little by it; but at least it will

<sup>1</sup> That the answer to Burnet was written by Varillas himself is shown by the title and whole contents of the pamphlet by Burnet in which the following extract is taken.



ve to keep him in from other extravagancies; and if he ins little honour by this work, yet he cannot lose so much it as he has done by his last employment."<sup>1</sup>

Having probably felt his own inferiority in theological ntroversy, he was desirous of trying whether, by bringing poetry to aid his arguments, he might become a more icacious defender of his new profession. To reason in rse was, indeed, one of his powers; but subtilty and rmony united are still feeble, when opposed to truth.

Actuated therefore by zeal for Rome, or hope of fame, published the "*Hind and Panther*,"<sup>2</sup> a poem in which e church of Rome, figured by the *milk-white Hind*, demands her tenets against the church of England, represented the *Panther*, a beast beautiful, but spotted.

A fable which exhibits two beasts talking Theology, appears at once full of absurdity; and it was accordingly dieuled in the "*City Mouse and Country Mouse*," a rody, written by Montague, afterwards earl of Halifax,<sup>3</sup> ad Prior,<sup>3</sup> who then gave the first specimen of his abilities.

The conversion of such a man, at such a time, was not kely to pass uncensured. Three dialogues were published y the facetious *Thomas Brown*, of which the two first were alled "*Reasons of Mr. Bayes's changing his religion:*" and the third "*The Reasons of Mr. Hains the player's*

<sup>1</sup> Burnet's *Reply to Varillas's Answer*, pp. 138-240.

<sup>2</sup> *The Hind and the Panther, a Poem, In Three Parts.* Tonson, 1687, S. S. D. vol. x. p. 85. Ald. D. vol. ii. p. 113. "You have a war in England between the Hind and the Panther. General Dryden is an expert captain; but I always thought him fitter for execution than for counsel. Who commands the Panther forces I know not. The author of the *Revolver*, while he endeavours to expose the morals of his enemy, exposes more his own dulness by his poetry. The gentleman who has transversed the Poem shows that the genius of the *Rehearsal* is not dead with the Duke of Bucks." Sir George Etherege: Letter quoted by P. Cunningham.

<sup>3</sup> *Vid. infr.* vol. ii. *Lives of Halifax and Prior.*

conversion and re-conversion." The first was printed in 1688, the second not till 1690, the third in 1691. The clamour seems to have been long continued, and the subject to have strongly fixed the publick attention.

In the two first dialogues *Bayes* is brought into the company of *Crites* and *Eugenius*, with whom he had formerly debated on dramatick poetry. The two talkers in the third are Mr. *Bayes*<sup>1</sup> and Mr. *Hains*.

Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor destitute of fancy; but he seems to have thought it the pinnacle of excellence to be a *merry fellow*; and therefore laid out his powers upon small jests or gross buffoonery, so that his performances have little intrinsick value, and were read only while they were recommended by the novelty of the event that occasioned them.

These dialogues are like his other works: what sense or knowledge they contain, is disgraced by the garb in which it is exhibited. One great source of pleasure is to call Dryden *little Bayes*. *Ajax*, who happens to be mentioned, is *he that wore as many cowhides upon his shield as would have furnished half the king's army with shoe-leather*.

Being asked whether he has seen the "*Hind and Panther*," *Crites* answers: *Seen it! Mr. Bayes, why I can stir no where but it pursues me; it haunts me worse than a powder-buttoned serjeant does a decayed cit. Sometimes I meet it in a band-box, when my laundress brings home my linen; sometimes, whether I will or no, it lights my pipe at a coffee-house; sometimes it surprises me in a trunkmaker's shop; and sometimes it refreshes my memory for me on the backside of a Chancery-lane parcel. For your comfort too, Mr. Bayes, I have not only seen it, as you may perceive, but have read it too, and can quote it as freely upon occasion as a frugal tradesman can quote that noble treatise the "Worth of a*

<sup>1</sup> "Little Bayes" was the nickname given to Dryden by the Duke Buckingham in the *Rehearsal*. *Vid. sup.* p. 386.

ny" to his extravagant 'prentice, that revels in stewed  
les, and penny custards.

The whole animation of these compositions arises from  
profusion of ludicrous and affected comparisons. *To*  
*ire one's chastity, says Bayes, little more is necessary than*  
*ave off a correspondence with the other sex, which, to a*  
*man, is no greater a punishment than it would be to a*  
*atic parson to be forbid seeing the Cheats and the Com-*  
*tee; or for my Lord Mayor and Aldermen to be inter-*  
*ed the sight of the London Cuckold.*—This is the general  
sin, and therefore I shall be easily excused the labour of  
re transcription.

Brown does not wholly forget past transactions: *You*  
*in, says Crites to Bayes, with a very indifferent religion,*  
*I have not mended the matter in your last choice. It was*  
*reason that your Muse, which appeared first in a Tyrant's*  
*rel, should employ her last efforts to justify the usurpa-*  
*as of the Hind.*

Next year the nation was summoned to celebrate the  
th of the Prince. Now was the time for Dryden to  
se his imagination, and strain his voice. Happy days  
re at hand, and he was willing to enjoy and diffuse the  
icipated blessings. He published a poem, filled with  
dictions of greatness and prosperity; predictions of  
ich it is not necessary to tell how they have been  
ified.

A few months passed after these joyful notes, and every  
ssom of popish hope was blasted for ever by the Revo-  
ion. A papist now could be no longer Laureat. The  
enue, which he had enjoyed with so much pride and  
ise, was transferred to Shadwell, an old enemy, whom  
had formerly stigmatised by the name of *Og*. Dryden  
uld not decently complain that he was deposed; but  
med very angry that Shadwell succeeded him, and has  
efore celebrated the intruder's inauguration in a poem

I.

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exquisitely satirical, called "Mac Flecknoe;"<sup>1</sup> of which the "Dunciad," as Pope himself declares, is an imitation, though more extended in its plan, and more diversified in its incidents.

It is related by Prior,<sup>2</sup> that Lord Dorset, when, as chamberlain, he was constrained to eject Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purse an allowance equal to the salary. This is no romantick or incredible act of generosity; an hundred a year is often enough given to claims less cogent, by men less famed for liberality. Yet Dryden always represented himself as suffering under a public infiction; and once particularly demands respect for the patience with which he endured the loss of his little fortune. His patron might, indeed, enjoin him to suppress his bounty; but if he suffered nothing, he should not have complained.

During the short reign of king James he had written nothing for the stage,<sup>3</sup> being, in his opinion, more profitably employed in controversy and flattery. Of praise he might perhaps have been less lavish without inconvenience, for

<sup>1</sup> *Mac Flecknoe, or a Satire upon the True Blue Protestant Poet, J.S.*, by the Author of *Absalom and Achitophel*. This consisted of one and a half sheet, 4to, 1682, and was sold for twopence. See *S. S. D.* vol. x. p. 429. *Ald. D.* vol. ii. p. 224.

"'Mac Flecknoe' was published 4to, in 1682, and again in 1684, in Jonson's first Miscellany, and on both occasions while Dryden was himself Laureate. 'Mac Flecknoe' originated in Shadwell's two anonymous attacks on Dryden, 'The Medal of John Bayes,' 1682, 4to, and the 'The Tory Poets,' 1682, 4to. Dryden's dislike to Flecknoe had its origin, I suspect, in a pamphlet, signed R. F. (evidently Richard Flecknoe) written in vindication of Sir Robert Howard. See my paper on this subject in *Gents. Mag.* for December, 1850. This curious pamphlet was unknown to Johnson, Malone, and Scott."—P. CUNNINGHAM.

<sup>2</sup> In the Dedication of his Poems to the Earl of Dorset, *Ald. Prior*, vol. i. p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Except the opera "Albion and Albanus," which was first played 6th June, 1685.



times was never said to have much regard for poetry: he was to be flattered only by adopting his religion.

Times were now changed: Dryden was no longer the court-poet, and was to look back for support to his former trade; and having waited about two years, either considering himself as discountenanced by the publick, or perhaps expecting a second revolution, he produced "*Don Sebastian*" in 1690;<sup>1</sup> and in the next four years four dramas more.

In 1693 appeared a new version of Juvenal and Persius.<sup>2</sup> Of Juvenal he translated the first, third, sixth, tenth, and sixteenth satires;<sup>3</sup> and of Persius the whole work.<sup>4</sup> On this occasion he introduced his two sons to the publick, as nurselings of the Muses. The fourteenth of Juvenal was the work of John, and the seventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed a very ample preface in the form of a dedication to Lord Dorset; and there gives an account of the design which he had once formed to write an epic poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. He considered the epick as necessarily including some kind of supernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of contest between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he conceived that each might be represented zealous for his charge, without any intended opposition to the purposes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds must in part be ignorant.

This is the most reasonable scheme of celestial interposition that ever was formed. The surprizes and terrors of enchantments, which have succeeded to the intrigues and

<sup>1</sup> This play was brought out with great pomp, but was at first coldly received. It is now considered the *chef d'œuvre* of Dryden's plays. *S. D.* vol. vii.

<sup>2</sup> *S. S. D.* vol. xiii. p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> *Ald. D.* vol. v. pp. 71-156.

<sup>4</sup> *Ald. D.* vol. v. pp. 161-207.

oppositions of pagan deities, afford very striking scenes, and open a vast extent to the imagination; but, as Boileau observes,<sup>1</sup> and Boileau will be seldom found mistaken, with this incurable defect, that in a contest between heaven and hell we know at the beginning which is to prevail; for this reason we follow Rinaldo<sup>2</sup> to the enchanted wood with more curiosity than terror.

In the scheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had address enough to surmount. In a war justice can be but on one side; and to entitle the hero to the protection of angels, he must fight in the defence of indubitable right. Yet some of the celestial beings, thus opposed to each other, must have been represented as defending guilt.

That this poem was never written, is reasonably to be lamented. It would doubtless have improved our numbers, and enlarged our language, and might perhaps have contributed by pleasing instruction to rectify our opinions, and purify our manners.

What he required as the indispensable condition of such an undertaking, a publick stipend, was not likely in those times to be obtained. Riches were not become familiar to us, nor had the nation yet learned to be liberal.

This plan he charged Blackmore<sup>3</sup> with stealing; only, says he,<sup>4</sup> *the guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage.*

In 1694, he began the most laborious and difficult of all his works, the translation of Virgil; from which he borrowed two months, that he might turn Fresnoy's "Art of Painting" into English prose.<sup>5</sup> The preface, which he

<sup>1</sup> Boileau, *L'art poétique*, chant 3, l. 213.

<sup>2</sup> Tasso. *La Gerusalemme*, canto 18, st. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Vid. infr. Life of Blackmore*, vol. ii.

<sup>4</sup> Preface to *Fables*, S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 242.

<sup>5</sup> Printed in 1695, with a *Parallel of Poetry and Painting*, by Dry prefixed.

ists to have written in twelve mornings exhibits a jumble of poetry and painting with a miscellaneous collection of critical remarks such as most a mind started like no labour to produce them.

In 1697, he published his version of the works of Virgil;<sup>2</sup> and that no opportunity of profit might be lost, dedicated the *Pastorals* to the Lord Clifford, the *Georgics* to the Earl of Chesterfield, and the *Æneid* to the Earl of Malborough. This economy of flattery, at once lavish and discreet, did not pass without observation.

This translation was censured by Milbourne, a clergyman, styled by Pope *the fairest of critics*, because he exhibited his own version to be compared with that which he condemned.

His last work was his "Fables," published in 1699,<sup>3</sup> in consequence, as is supposed, of a contract now in the hands of Mr. Tonson; by which he obliged himself, in consideration of three hundred pounds, to finish for the press ten thousand verses.<sup>4</sup>

In this volume is comprised the well-known ode on St. Cecilia's day,<sup>5</sup> which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he spent a fortnight in composing and cor-

<sup>1</sup> By subscription.

<sup>2</sup> S. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 274. Malone (p. 254) states that all the copies were dispersed in a very few months, and a second edition was issued the following year.

<sup>3</sup> Luke Milbourne (1667-1720), Rector of Yarmouth, from which office he was said to have been turned out for writing libels on his parishioners. He was also Lecturer at Shoreditch. His works, besides *Notes on Dryden's Virgil*, published 1698, were very miscellaneous, including thirty-one Sermons, and a Metrical translation of the *Psalms*.

<sup>4</sup> This date should be 1700.

See Malone, p. 319.

This ode was published separately in folio, 1697. It was written by Dryden for the annual celebration of St. Cecilia's Day in 1697, and set to music by Draghi, an eminent Italian composer. S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 69. Ald. D. vol. iii. p. 2.

recting. But what is this to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whose "Equivoque," a poem of only three hundred forty-six lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and three years to revise it!

Part of this book of Fables is the first *Iliad* in English, intended as a specimen of a version of the whole. Considering into what hands Homer was to fall,<sup>1</sup> the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no further.

The time was now at hand which was to put an end to all his schemes and labours. On the first of May 1701, having been some time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died in Gerard-street of a mortification in his leg.<sup>2</sup>

There is extant a wild story relating to some vexatious events that happened at his funeral, which, at the end of Congreve's Life, by a writer of I know not what credit,<sup>3</sup> are thus related, as I find the account transferred to a biographical dictionary:

"Mr. Dryden dying on the Wednesday morning, Dr. Thomas Sprat, then bishop of Rochester and dean of Westminster, sent the next day to the lady Elizabeth Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, that he would make a present of the ground, which was forty pounds, with all the other Abbey-fees. The lord Halifax likewise sent to the lady Elizabeth, and Mr. Charles Dryden her son, that, if they would give him leave to bury Mr. Dryden, he would inter him with a gentleman's private funeral, and afterwards bestow five hundred pounds on a monument in the Abbey; which, as they had no reason to refuse, they accepted. On the

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, alludes to Pope's translation of the *Iliad*.

<sup>2</sup> For announcements of his death, which took place May 1st, 1700. See Malone, p. 336.

<sup>3</sup> See Malone, p. 348, for an account of Mrs. Thomas' (Curll's Corinn who was the writer of the "wild story." Her *Memoirs*, written by herself, are full of equally wonderful and credible relations.



Saturday following the company came: the corpse was put into a velvet hearse, and eighteen mourning coaches, filled with company, attended. When they were just ready to move, the lord Jefferies, son of the lord chancellor Jefferies, with some of his rakish companions coming by, asked whose funeral it was: and being told Mr. Dryden's, he said, 'What, shall Dryden, the greatest honour and ornament of the nation, be buried after this private manner! No, gentlemen, let all that loved Mr. Dryden, and honour his memory, alight and join with me in gaining my lady's consent to let me have the honour of his interment, which shall be after another manner than this; and I will bestow a thousand pounds on a monument in the Abbey for him.' The gentlemen in the coaches, not knowing of the bishop of Rochester's favour, nor of the lord Halifax's generous design (they both having, out of respect to the family, enjoined the lady Elizabeth and her son to keep their favour concealed to the world, and let it pass for their own expence) readily came out of the coaches, and attended lord Jefferies up to the lady's bedside, who was then sick; he repeated the purport of what he had before said; but she absolutely refusing, he fell on his knees, vowing never to rise till his request was granted. The rest of the company by his desire kneeled also; and the lady, being under a sudden surprise, fainted away. As soon as she recovered her speech, she cried, *No, no.* Enough, gentlemen, replied he; my lady is very good, she says, *Go, go.* She repeated her former words with all her strength, but in vain; for her feeble voice was lost in their acclamations of joy; and the lord Jefferies ordered the hearsemen to carry the corpse to Mr. Russel's, an undertaker's in Cheapside, and leave it there till he should send orders for the embalment, which, he added, should be after the royal manner. His directions were obeyed, the company dispersed, and lady Elizabeth and her son remained inconsolable. The next day

Mr. Charles Dryden waited on the lord Halifax and the bishop, to excuse his mother and himself, by relating the real truth. But neither his lordship nor the bishop would admit of any plea; especially the latter, who had the Abbey lighted, the ground opened, the choir attending, an anthem ready set, and himself waiting for some time without any corpse to bury. The undertaker, after three days expectation of orders for embalmment without receiving any, waited on the lord Jefferies; who pretending ignorance of the matter, turned it off with an ill-natured jest, saying, That those who observed the orders of a drunken frolick deserved no better; that he remembered nothing at all of it; and that he might do what he pleased with the corpse. Upon this, the undertaker waited upon the lady Elizabeth and her son, and threatened to bring the corpse home, and set it before the door. They desired a day's respite, which was granted. Mr. Charles Dryden wrote a handsome letter to the lord Jefferies, who returned it with this cool answer, 'That he knew nothing of the matter, and would be troubled no more about it.' He then addressed the lord Halifax and the bishop of Rochester, who absolutely refused to do any thing in it. In this distress Dr. Garth sent for the corpse to the College of Physicians, and proposed a funeral by subscription, to which himself set a most noble example. At last a day, about three weeks after Dryden's decease, was appointed for the interment. Dr. Garth pronounced a fine Latin oration, at the College, before the corpse; which was attended to the Abbey by a numerous train of coaches. When the funeral was over, Charles Dryden sent a challenge to the lord Jefferies, refusing to answer it, he sent several others to the bishop, often himself; but could neither get a letter of admittance to speak to him: which so incensed him, he resolved, since his lordship refused to receive him, that he would watch an opportunity to

He married<sup>1</sup> the lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the earl of Berkshire,<sup>2</sup> with circumstances, according to the satire imputed to lord Somers, not very honourable to either party: by her he had three sons, Charles, John, and Henry. Charles was usher of the palace to pope Clement the XIth,<sup>3</sup> and visiting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to swim across the Thames at Windsor.

John was author of a comedy called "The Husband his own Cuckold." He is said to have died at Rome. Henry<sup>4</sup> entered into some religious order. It is some proof of Dryden's sincerity in his second religion, that he taught it to his sons. A man conscious of hypocritical profession in himself, is not likely to convert others; and as his sons were qualified in 1693 to appear among the translators of Juvenal, they must have been taught some religion before their father's change.

Of the person of Dryden<sup>5</sup> I know not any account; of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cunningham notes, "He was married (by licence) in the church of St. Swithin, by London Stone (as appears by the register of that church) on the 1st December, 1663. He is described as a parishioner of St. Clement Danes, about the age of thirty, and Lady Elizabeth is twenty-five. The poet's signature is written "Driden."

<sup>2</sup> Sister of Sir Robert Howard.

<sup>3</sup> He was Chamberlain of the Household to Pope Innocent XII. See Malone, p. 400.

<sup>4</sup> Erasmus Henry, born 1669. He studied at Douay, was ordained priest, 1694, joined the Dominicans, and became sub-prior of the convent of Holy Cross, Bornheim. In 1710 he succeeded to the baronetcy on the death of his cousin, Sir John Dryden, and died the same year.

<sup>5</sup> The earliest portrait of Dryden is the one now in the Picture Gallery at Oxford. The best likeness is said to be the portrait by Kneller at Bayfordbury Hall, Hertfordshire. This was painted for Jacob Tonson, as one of a series of the Kitcat Club, and engraved by Edelfwick in 1700. For further details see Malone, p. 432, and Bell, p. 978.

Mr. Cunningham gives a note from a MS. Journal of Gray, the poet, respecting a portrait of Dryden by Riley at Bifrons, near Canterbury. "In a long wig—disagreeable face."



his mind, the portrait which has been left by Congreve, who knew him with great familiarity, is such as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. "He was," we are told, "of a nature<sup>1</sup> exceedingly humane and compassionate, ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a sincere reconciliation with those that had offended him. His friendship, where he professed it, went beyond his professions. He was of a very easy, of very pleasing access; but somewhat slow, and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others: he had that in his nature which abhorred intrusion into any society whatever. He was therefore less known, and consequently his character became more liable to misapprehensions and misrepresentations: he was very modest, and very easily to be discountenanced in his approaches to his equals or superiors. As his reading had been very extensive, so was he very happy in a memory tenacious of every thing that he had read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than he was communicative of it; but then his communication was by no means pedantick, or imposed upon the conversation, but just such, and went so far as, by the natural turn of the conversation in which he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He was extreme ready, and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer who thought fit to consult him, and full as ready and patient to admit of the reprehensions of others, in respect of his own oversights or mistakes."

To this account of Congreve<sup>1</sup> nothing can be objected but the fondness of friendship; and to have excited that fondness in such a mind is no small degree of praise. The disposition of Dryden, however, is shewn in this character rather as it exhibited itself in cursory conversation, than as it operated on the more important parts of life. His pla-

<sup>1</sup> In the Preface to his edition of Dryden's *Works*, published 1762-3.



ability and his friendship indeed were solid virtues; but courtesy and good-humour are often found with little real worth. Since Congreve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the rest must be collected as it can from other testimonies, and particularly from those notices which Dryden has very liberally given us of himself.

The modesty which made him so slow to advance, and so easy to be repulsed, was certainly no suspicion of deficient merit, or unconsciousness of his own value: he appears to have known, in its whole extent, the dignity of his character, and to have set a very high value on his own powers and performances. He probably did not offer his conversation, because he expected it to be solicited; and he retired from a cold reception, not submissive but indignant, with such reverence of his own greatness as made him unwilling to expose it to neglect or violation.

His modesty was by no means inconsistent with ostentatiousness: he is diligent enough to remind the world of his merit, and expresses with very little scruple his high opinion of his own powers; but his self-commendations are read without scorn or indignation; we allow his claims, and love his frankness.

Tradition, however, has not allowed that his confidence in himself exempted him from jealousy of others. He is accused of envy and insidiousness; and is particularly charged with inciting Creech<sup>1</sup> to translate Horace, that he might lose the reputation which Lucretius had given him.

Of this charge we immediately discover that it is merely conjectural; the purpose was such as no man would confess; and a crime that admits no proof, why should we believe?

He has been described as magisterially presiding over

<sup>1</sup> See Malone, p. 506.

the younger writers, and assuming the distribution of poetical fame; but he who excels has a right to teach, and he whose judgement is incontestable may, without usurpation, examine and decide.

Congreve represents him as ready to advise and instruct; but there is reason to believe that his communication was rather useful than entertaining. He declares of himself that he was saturnine,<sup>1</sup> and not one of those whose spritely sayings diverted company; and one of his censurers makes him say,

"Nor wine nor love could ever see me gay;  
To writing bred, I knew not what to say."<sup>2</sup>

There are men whose powers operate only at leisure and in retirement, and whose intellectual vigour deserts them in conversation; whom merriment confuses, and objection disconcerts; whose bashfulness restrains their exertion, and suffers them not to speak till the time of speaking is past; or whose attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been considered, and cannot be recalled.

Of Dryden's sluggishness in conversation it is vain to search or to guess the cause. He certainly wanted neither sentiments nor language; his intellectual treasures were great, though they were locked up from his own use. *His thoughts when he wrote, flowed in upon him so fast, that his only care was which to chuse, and which to reject.* Such rapidity of composition naturally promises a flow of talk, yet we must be content to believe what an enemy says of him, when he likewise says it of himself.<sup>3</sup> But whatever

<sup>1</sup> *Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poetry.* B. N. D. vol. ii. p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> This is from the lampoon entitled *Dryden's Nature to his Muse*, which was generally ascribed to Lord Broucker, though, as Pope believed, wrongfully.

<sup>3</sup> In his *Defence of the Essay of Dramatic Poetry.* Malone's *Dryden*, vol. i. part ii. p. 163.

was his character as a companion, it appears that he lived in familiarity with the highest persons of his time. It is related by Carte of the duke of Ormond,<sup>1</sup> that he used often to pass a night with Dryden, and those with whom Dryden consorted: who they were, Carte has not told; but certainly the convivial table at which Ormond sat was not surrounded with a plebeian society. He was indeed reproached with boasting of his familiarity with the great; and Horace will support him in the opinion, that to please superiours is not the lowest kind of merit.

The merit of pleasing must, however, be estimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions or laudable qualities. Caresses and preferments are often bestowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the procurers of pleasure, or the flatterers of vanity. Dryden has never been charged with any personal agency unworthy of a good character: he abetted vice and vanity only with his pen. One of his enemies has accused him of lewdness in his conversation; but if accusation without proof be credited, who shall be innocent?

His works afford too many examples of dissolute licentiousness, and abject adulation; but they were probably, like his merriment, artificial and constrained; the effects of study and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleasure.

Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness for the sake of spreading the contagion in society, I wish not to conceal or excuse the depravity.—Such degradation of the dignity of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. What consolation can be had, Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to testify his repentance.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of James, Duke of Ormond*, by Thomas Carte, M.A. (1735-6), vol. ii. p. 554.

Of dramattick immorality he did not want examples among his predecessors, or companions among his contemporaries; but in the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not whether, since the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled, except by Afra Behn in an address to Eleanor Gwyn.<sup>1</sup> When once he has undertaken the task of praise, he no longer retains shame in himself, nor supposes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are observed to diffuse perfumes from year to year, without sensible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expences, however lavish. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endless variation; and when he had scattered on the hero of the day the golden shower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wished to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another stamp. Of this kind of meanness he never seems to decline the practice, or lament the necessity: he considers the great as entitled to encomiastick homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention than mortified by the prostitution of his judgement. It is indeed not certain, that on these occasions his judgement much rebelled against his interest. There are minds which easily sink into submission, that look on grandeur with undistinguishing reverence, and discover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches.

With his praises of others and of himself is always intermingled a strain of discontent and lamentation, a sullen growl of resentment, or a querulous murmur of dis-

<sup>1</sup> In her play, *Feigned Courtesans*. Aphra Behn was the widow of a Dutch merchant (1642-1689). She became a political spy, but is best remembered for her novel *Oroonoko*, an appeal to Englishmen against slavery.



treſs. He works are under-valued, his merit is unrewarded, and *he has few thanks to pay his ſtars that he was born among Engliſhmen*. To his criticks he is ſometimes contemptuous, ſometimes reſentful, and ſometimes ſubmiſſive. The writer who thinks his works formed for duration, miſtakes his intereſt when he mentions his enemies. He degrades his own dignity by ſhewing that he was affected by their cenſures, and gives laſting importance to names, which, left to themſelves, would vaniſh from remembrance. From this principle Dryden did not oft depart; his complaints are for the greater part general; he ſeldom pollutes his page with an adverſe name. He condeſcended indeed to a controversy with Settle, in which he perhaps may be conſidered rather as aſſaulting than repelling; and ſince Settle is ſunk into oblivion, his libel remains injurious only to himſelf.

Among answers to criticks, no poetical attacks, or altercations, are to be included; they are, like other poems, effuſions of genius, produced as much to obtain praiſe as to obviate cenſure. Theſe Dryden practiſed, and in theſe he excelled.

Of Collier,<sup>1</sup> Blackmore,<sup>2</sup> and Milbourn, he has made mention in the preface to his Fables. To the cenſure of Collier, whoſe remarks may be rather termed admonitions than criticisms, he makes little reply; being, at the age of ſixty-eight, attentive to better things than the claps of a

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Collier (1650-1726). An eminent nonjuring divine and eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian. See Johnson's admirable deſcription of his character in the *Life of Congreve*, vol. ii. His attack effected a great reformation in the theatre and was entitled, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneneſs of the Engliſh Stage*. Lond. 1738. 8vo. Mr. Saintsbury, *S. S. D.* vol. i. p. 357, mentions "an excellent account of Collier's book, which has appeared in M. A. Beljame's *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre au dix-huitième ſiècle*. Paris, 1881."

<sup>2</sup> *Vid. infr.* vol. ii.

house. He complains of Collier's rudeness; and the re-play of his raillery; and asserts that in many places has perverted by his glosses the meaning of what he censures; but in other things he confesses that he is justified; and says, with great calmness and candour. *I have rid guilty to all thoughts or expressions of mine that can truly accused of obscenity, immorality, or profaneness, and act them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be friend, he will be glad of my repentance.* Yet, as our dispositions are imperfect, he left standing in the new book a reflection on Collier of great asperity, and loaded of more asperity than wit.<sup>2</sup>

Blackmore he represents<sup>1</sup> as made his enemy by the poem of "Absalom and Achitophel," which *he thinks a libel hard upon his fanatick patrons*; and charges him with borrowing the plan of his "Arthur" from the preface to *venal*, though he had, says he, *the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor, but instead of it to traduce me in a libel.*

The libel in which Blackmore traduced him was a satire upon Wit;""<sup>5</sup> in which, having lamented the exuberance of false wit and the deficiency of true, he proposes that all wit should be re-coined before it is current, and appoints masters of assay who shall reject all that is light and lebased.

Preface to the *Fables*, S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 243.

Probably this refers to page 214 of the Preface, where "a religious writer" is charged with mixing truth with falsehood, and following the old rule of calumniating strongly that something may remain."

S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 241.

*Ibid.* p. 242.

Mr. Peter Cunningham here notes "The first edition of Blackmore's *venal* (folio, 1700) does not contain the softer couplet which Johnson has in it; nor do I find the couplet in question in Blackmore's print of the *Satire* in his *Collection of Poems*, printed in 1718, 8vo. The error is repeated in Johnson's *Life of Blackmore*, *vid. infr.* vol. ii.

" 'Tis true, that when the coarse and worthless dross  
Is purg'd away, there will be mighty loss ;  
Ev'n Congreve, Southern, manly Wycherley,  
When thus refin'd, will grievous sufferers be ;  
Into the melting-pot when Dryden comes,  
What horrid stench will rise, what noisome fumes !  
How will he shrink, when all his lewd allay,  
And wicked mixture, shall be purg'd away ! "

Thus stands the passage in the last edition ; but in the original there was an abatement of the censure, beginning thus :

" But what remains will be so pure, 'twill bear  
Th' examination of the most severe."

Blackmore, finding the censure resented, and the civility disregarded, ungenerously omitted the softer part. Such variations discover a writer who consults his passions more than his virtue ; and it may be reasonably supposed that Dryden imputes his enmity to its true cause.

Of Milbourne he wrote only in general terms, such as are always ready at the call of anger, whether just or not : a short extract will be sufficient. *He pretends a quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul upon priesthood ; if I have, I am only to ask pardon of good priests, and am afraid his share of the reparation will come to little. Let him be satisfied that he shall never be able to force himself upon me for an adversary ; I condemn him too much to enter into competition with him.*<sup>1</sup>

*As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such scoundrels that they deserve not the least notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourne are only distinguished from the crowd by being remembered to their infamy.*<sup>2</sup>

Dryden indeed discovered, in many of his writings, an

<sup>1</sup> S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 244.

acted and absurd malignity to priests and priesthood. which naturally raised him many enemies, and which was sometimes as unseasonably resented as it was exerted. Trapp is angry<sup>1</sup> that he calls the sacrificer in the *Georgicks* "the *holy butcher*:"<sup>2</sup> the translation is indeed liculious; but Trapp's anger arises from his zeal, not for the author, but the priest; as if any reproach of the lies of paganism could be extended to the preachers of truth.

Dryden's dislike of the priesthood is imputed by Langbaine,<sup>3</sup> and I think by Brown,<sup>4</sup> to a repulse which he suffered when he solicited ordination; but he denies, in the preface to his "Fables," that he ever designed to enter into the church; and such a denial he would not have hazarded, if he could have been convicted of falsehood.

Malevolence to the clergy is seldom at a great distance from irreverence of religion, and Dryden affords no exception to this observation. His writings exhibit many passages, which, with all the allowance that can be made for characters and occasions, are such as piety would not have admitted, and such as may vitiate light and unprincipled minds. But there is no reason for supposing that he disbelieved the religion which he disobeyed. He got his duty rather than disowned it. His tendency to looseness is the effect of levity, negligence, and loose conversation, with a desire of accommodating himself to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as

<sup>1</sup> *Preface to the Æneis*, Trapp's *Virgil*, ed. 1731, vol. i. p. lxxxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Dryden took delight in abusing priests, and religion: *Virgil* not."

<sup>3</sup> *Georgics*, book iii. S. S. D. vol. xiv. p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> *Langbaine*, ed. 1691, p. 171.

<sup>5</sup> "But you, I find, still continue your old humour, which we are to learn from the year of Hegira, the loss of Eton, or since orders were refused you." Tom Brown, *Pref. 2nd Dial.*—P. CUNNINGHAM.



far as he durst. When he professed himself a convert to Popery, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The persecution of criticks was not the worst of his vexations; he was much more disturbed by the importunities of want. His complaints of poverty are so frequently repeated, either with the dejection of weakness sinking in helpless misery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from mankind, that it is impossible not to detest the age which could impose on such a man the necessity of such solicitations, or not to despise the man who could submit to such solicitations without necessity.

Whether by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence I am afraid that the greatest part of his life was passed in exigences. Such outcries were surely never uttered but in severe pain. Of his supplies or his expences no probable estimate can now be made. Except the salary of the Laureate, to which king James added<sup>1</sup> the office of Historiographer, perhaps with some additional emoluments,<sup>2</sup> his whole revenue seems to have been casual; and it is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal, and they that trust her promises make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of to-morrow.

Of his plays the profit was not great, and of the produce of his other works very little intelligence can be had. I

<sup>1</sup> Dryden was created Historiographer in August, 1670. So the King James merely continued him in that office.

<sup>2</sup> Both Charles and James seem to have added some small pension to Dryden's salary, but he was often in want, and a touching letter given by Malone, p. 179, in which he asks payment of half a year's salary, and urges his claim for some small employment to render his condition easy—he having three sons growing to man's estate. He adds, "Tis enough for one age to have neglected Mr. Cowley, and starved Mr. Butler."

iscoursing with the late amiable Mr. Tonson,<sup>1</sup> I could not find that any memorials of the transactions between his predecessor and Dryden had been preserved, except the following papers :

"I do hereby promise to pay John Dryden, Esq; or order, on the 25th of March, 1699, the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas, in consideration of ten thousand verses, which the said John Dryden, Esq; is to deliver to me Jacob Tonson, when finished, whereof seven thousand five hundred verses, more or less, are already in the said Jacob Tonson's possession. And I do hereby farther promise, and engage myself, to make up the said sum of two hundred and fifty guineas three hundred pounds sterling to the said John Dryden, Esq; his executors, administrators, or assigns, at the beginning of the second impression of the said ten thousand verses.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 20th day of March, 169<sup>s</sup>/<sub>5</sub>.

" Jacob Tonson.

Sealed and delivered, being first duly stamp't, pursuant to the acts of parliament for that purpose, in the presence of

" Ben. Portlock.

" Will. Congreve."

" March 24th, 1698.

" Received then of Mr. Jacob Tonson the sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings, in pursuance

<sup>1</sup> There were two great-nephews of the famous Jacob Tonson, either of whom will answer to this description. Malone believes it referred to Jacob who died in 1767, and was the last commercial name of the family. Mr. Cunningham thinks that Richard, who died 1772, was meant, but though a partner with his brother Jacob, he had practically left the business, and was a country gentleman, and M.P. for Windsor.

of an agreement for ten thousand verses, to be delivered by me to the said Jacob Tonson, whereof I have already delivered to him about seven thousand five hundred, more or less; he the said Jacob Tonson being obliged to make up the foresaid sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings three hundred pounds, at the beginning of the second impression of the foresaid ten thousand verses;

“I say, received by me

“John Dryden.

“Witness Charles Dryden.”

Two hundred and fifty guineas, at £1 1s. 6d. is £268 15s.

It is manifest from the dates of this contract, that it relates to the volume of “Fables,” which contains about twelve thousand verses, and for which therefore the payment must have been afterwards enlarged.

I have been told of another letter<sup>1</sup> yet remaining, in which he desires Tonson to bring him money, to pay for a watch which he had ordered for his son, and which the maker would not leave without the price.

The inevitable consequence of poverty is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourse<sup>2</sup> in his exigencies but to his bookseller. The particular character of Tonson I do not know; but the general conduct of traders was much less liberal in those times than in our own; their views were narrower, and their manners grosser. To the mercantile ruggedness of that race, the delicacy of the poet was sometimes exposed. Lord Bolingbroke,<sup>3</sup> who in his

<sup>1</sup> Fifteen letters from Dryden to Tonson were printed by Malone, and thirty to other persons, vol. i. part ii.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. P. Cunningham was the first to discover that Dryden held the office of Collector of Customs in the port of London, and gives the date of the patent, 17th Dec. 1683.

<sup>3</sup> Malone states that Lord Bolingbroke in 1697, when Mr. St. John, furnished Granville with a Prologue to his *Heroic Love*, and in the same year wrote encomiastic verses on Dryden.

uth had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King,<sup>1</sup> of Oxford, that one day, when he visited Dryden, they heard, as they were conversing, another person entering the house. "This," said Dryden, "is Tonson. You will take care not to depart before he goes away; for I have not completed the sheet which I promised him; and if you leave me unprotected, I must suffer all the rudeness to which his sentiment can prompt his tongue."

What rewards he obtained for his poems, besides the payment of the bookseller, cannot be known: Mr. Derrick, who consulted some of his relations,<sup>2</sup> was informed that his "Fables" obtained five hundred pounds from the dutchess of Ormond; a present not unsuitable to the magnificence of that splendid family; and he quotes Moyle,<sup>3</sup> as relating that forty pounds were paid by a musical society for the use of "Alexander's Feast."<sup>4</sup>

In those days the oeconomy of government was yet unsettled, and the payments of the Exchequer were dilatory and uncertain: of this disorder there is reason to believe that the Laureat sometimes felt the effects; for in one of his prefaces he complains of those, who, being intrusted with the distribution of the Prince's bounty, suffer those that depend upon it to languish in penury.

Of his petty habits or slight amusements, tradition has retained little. Of the only two men whom I have found of whom he was personally known, one told me that at the house which he frequented, called Will's Coffee-house,<sup>5</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> William King (1685-1763), Principal of St. Mary Hall, Oxford. He was who, being then secretary to Lord Arran, Chancellor of Oxford, brought to Johnson, in 1755, the diploma of his Master of Arts degree.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. i. pp. 86, 361.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Moyle (1672-1721), translated Xenophon's *Discourse upon improving the State of Athens* to be prefixed to Davenant's *Discourses on the Public Revenues and Trade of England*.

<sup>4</sup> See Malone, p. 287, for this story.

<sup>5</sup> Will's coffee-house was in Bow Street, Covent Garden, No. 1, on the



appeal upon any literary dispute was made to him; and the other related, that his armed chair, which in the winter had a settled and prescriptive place by the fire, was in the summer placed in the balcony, and that he called the two places his winter and his summer seat. This is all the intelligence which his two survivors afforded me.<sup>1</sup>

One of his opinions will do him no honour in the present age, though in his own time, at least in the beginning of it, he was far from having it confined to himself. He put great confidence in the prognostications of judicial astrology. In the Appendix to the "Life of Congreve" is a narrative of some of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled; but I know not the writer's means of information, or character of veracity.<sup>2</sup> That he had the configurations of the horoscope in his mind, and considered them as influencing the affairs of men, he does not forbear to hint.

"The utmost malice of the stars is past.—  
Now frequent *trines* the happier lights among,  
And *high-raiſ'd Jove*, from his dark prison freed,  
Those weights took off that on his planet hung,  
Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed."<sup>3</sup>

west side, at the corner of Russell Street. It was Dryden who made this house the great resort of the wits of his time. After his death Addison transferred his patronage to Button's the house opposite to Will's, and kept by an old servant of his. *Vid. infr. Life of Addison.*

<sup>1</sup> The two survivors were Colley Cibber and Owen McSwinnay. See Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iii. p. 113. Colley Cibber (1671-1757), an actor and successful writer of comedies. He was made Poet Laureate in 1757, but is remembered as the author of that interesting collection of theatrical anecdotes, the *Apology*, or *Memoirs of his own Life*.

Owen McSwinnay (died 1754), manager of Drury Lane Theatre, and afterwards of the Queen's theatre in the Haymarket. He wrote one comedy, *The Mask*, and two operas.

<sup>2</sup> The writer was Mrs. Thomas, Pope's *Curl's Corinna*, the promulgator of the "wild story" about Dryden's funeral. *Vid. supr.* p. 406.

<sup>3</sup> *Annus Mirabilis*. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 102.

le has elsewhere shewn his attention to the planetary  
owers; and in the preface to his "Fables"<sup>1</sup> has endeavoured obliquely to justify his superstition, by attributing  
is same to some of the Ancients. The latter, added to  
is narrative, leaves no doubt of his notions or practice.

So slight and so scanty is the knowledge which I have  
en able to collect concerning the private life and domestic  
manners of a man, whom every English generation  
ust mention with reverence as a critick and a poet.

Dryden may be properly considered as the father of  
nglish criticism, as the writer who first taught us to  
termine upon principles the merit of composition. Of  
r former poets, the greatest dramatist wrote without  
les, conducted through life and nature by a genius that  
rely misled, and rarely deserted him. Of the rest, those  
to knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach  
em.<sup>2</sup>

Two "Arts of English Poetry"<sup>3</sup> were written in the  
ys of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which  
omething might be learned, and a few hints had been  
ven by Jonson and Cowley; but Dryden's "Essay on  
ramatick Poetry"<sup>4</sup> was the first regular and valuable  
atise on the art of writing.

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Fables*, S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> "With this incomparable work should be read Johnson's exquisite  
ralliel of Dryden and Pope, in the *Life* of the latter Poet (*vid. infr.*  
l. iii.), in which 'the superiority of genius' is 'with some hesitation'  
tributed to Dryden." Malone, vol. i. p. 549.

<sup>3</sup> *A Discourse of English Poetrie*, together with the author's judgment,  
aching the Reformation of our English Verse, by William Webbe,  
aduate, Lond. 1586. 4to. Reprinted in vol. ii. of *Ancient Critical  
sayes upon English Poets' Poesy*. Haslewood, 1815. 4to.

*The Arte of English Poesie*, by George Puttenham, 1589. 4to.  
Some copies have a woodcut portrait of Queen Elizabeth.

<sup>4</sup> *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, published 1667. S. D. vol. xv.  
293.

He who, having formed his opinions in the present age of English literature, turns back to peruse this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increase of knowledge, or much novelty of instruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them partly from the Ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The structure of dramatic poems was not then generally understood. Audiences applauded by instinct, and poets perhaps often pleased by chance.

A writer who obtains his full purpose loses himself in his own lustre. Of an opinion which is no longer doubted, the evidence ceases to be examined. Of an art universally practised, the first teacher is forgotten. Learning once made popular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of something which we have bestowed upon ourselves, as the dew appears to rise from the field which it refreshes.

To judge rightly of an author, we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at least imported his science, and gave his country what it wanted before; or rather, he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own skill.

The dialogue on the Drama was one of his first essays of criticism, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore laboured with that diligence which he might allow himself somewhat to remit, when his name gave sanction to his positions, and his awe of the public was abated, partly by custom, and partly by success. It will not be easy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with illustrations. His portraits

English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and  
ance. The account of Shakspeare may stand as a per-  
al model of encomiastick criticism; exact without  
ateness, and lofty without exaggeration. The praise  
hed by Longinus,<sup>1</sup> on the attestation of the heroes of  
athon, by Demosthenes,<sup>2</sup> fades away before it. In a  
ines is exhibited a character, so extensive in its com-  
nsion, and so curious in its limitations, that nothing  
e added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the editors  
dmirers of Shakspeare, in all their emulation of reve-  
s, boast of much more than of having diffused and  
phrased this epitome of excellence, of having changed  
en's gold for baser metal, of lower value though of  
er bulk.

this, and in all his other essays on the same subject,  
riticism of Dryden is the criticism of a poet; not a  
collection of theorems, not a rude detection of faults,  
a perhaps the censor was not able to have committed;  
nginus. A Greek by birth, born about A.D. 213. He travelled  
East, and was made Professor of Greek to Queen Zenobia, of  
ra. He persuaded her to revolt against Rome, and when her  
as taken by the Emperor Aurelian, Longinus was put to death,  
ing in his last words, "This world is but a prison, and happy is  
o gets out of it soonest." Of many works only one, attributed to  
a somewhat doubtful authority, has been preserved, the treatise  
ψους (*De Sublimitate*), an enquiry into the causes and styles of  
ity in speaking and writing. Of him Pope says, *Essay on Criti-*  
375 :—

"Thee, bold Longinus, all the nine inspire,  
And bless their critic with a poet's fire :  
An ardent judge, who, zealous in his trust,  
With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just ;  
Whose own example strengthens all his laws,  
And is himself the great Sublime he draws."

A. MILNES.

reference is to Section 16 of *De Sublimitate*.

2 Kennedy's translation of the Orations of Demosthenes on the  
and on the Embassy. *Bohn's Classical Library*, p. 80, ed. 1855.



but a gay and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgement, by his power of performance.

The different manner and effect with which critical knowledge may be conveyed, was perhaps never more clearly exemplified than in the performances of Rymer<sup>1</sup> and Dryden. It was said of a dispute between two mathematicians, "*malim cum Scaligero errare, quam cum Clavio recte sapere*;"<sup>2</sup> that *it was more eligible to go wrong with one than right with the other*. A tendency of the same kind every mind must feel at the perusal of Dryden's prefaces and Rymer's discourses. With Dryden we are wandering in quest of Truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, drest in the graces of elegance; and if we miss her, the labour of the pursuit rewards itself; we are led only through fragrance and flowers: Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every step is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulsive by her mien, and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticism has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant.

As he had studied with great diligence the art of poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increasing, he had his mind stored with principles and observations; he poured out his knowledge with little labour; for of labour, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is sufficient reason to suspect that he

<sup>1</sup> *The Tragedies of the Last Age, considered by Thos. Rymer, 1692. A Short View of Tragedy, with Reflections on Shakespeare, 1693.*

<sup>2</sup> This appears to be merely an adaptation of Cicero's famous dictum. "*Malo cum Platone errare, quam cum aliis recte sentire.*" *Cic. Tus. Quæst. i. 17.*

Christopher Clavius (1537-1612) was a German Jesuit.

Joseph Juste Scaliger (1540-1609), author of the celebrated system of chronology, commentator on Varrus, Seneca, &c., son of the almost equally learned Julius Caesar Scaliger.

not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondness for the employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with willingness to take leave of his own idea, and an unvaried pursuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, part of his character.

His Criticism may be considered as general or occasional. His general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the structure of the human mind, he may doubtless be safely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occasional and particular positions were sometimes interested, sometimes negligent, and sometimes erroneous. It is not without reason that Trapp,<sup>1</sup> speaking of the praises which he bestows on Palamon and Arcite, says, "Novimus judicium Drydeni de poemate quodam *Chauceri*, pulchro sane illo, et admodum laudando, nimis in quod non modo vere epicum sit, sed *Iliada* etiam atque *Æneida* æquet, imo superet. Sed novimus eodem tempore illius maximi non semper accuratissimas esse censuras, nec ad severissimam criticæ normam exactas: illo iudicio idcirco quod optimum est, quod nunc præ manibus habet, & quo nunc occupatur."

He is therefore by no means constant to himself. His licence and desertion of dramatick rhyme is generally known. *Spence*,<sup>2</sup> in his remarks on Pope's "*Odyssey*," reproduces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the "*Eneid*," in favour of translating

There is a curious omission in this quotation. The passage runs thus: "Novimus quidem *Angli* judicium *Drydeni* popularis nostri de poemate quodam *Chauceri*, pulchro sane illo, et plurimum laudando; in quod non modo vere Epicum sit, sed *Iliada* etiam, atque *Æneida*, æquet, imo superet. Sed novimus eodem tempore Viri illius maximi non semper accuratissimas esse censuras, nec ad severissimam Criticæ normam exactas; illo iudice, optimum est plerumque quod ille præ manibus habet, et in quo nunc occupatur." *Praelectiones Poeticæ*. Ephus Trapp. A. M. ed. sec. 1722, p. 386.

*Essay on Pope's Odyssey*. 1727. Part I. pp. 121-2.

an epic poem into blank verse; but he forgets that when his author attempted the "Iliad," some years afterwards, he departed from his own decision, and translated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any license defend, he is not very scrupulous about what he asserts, nor very cautious, if the present purpose be served, no entangle himself in his own sophistries. But when all are exhausted, like other hunted animals, he sometimes stands at bay; when he cannot disown the grossness of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law prescribes morality to a comick poet.

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not to be trusted. His parallel of the versification with that of Claudian has been very justly censured.<sup>\*</sup> His comparison of the first line of Virgil the first of Statius is not happier.<sup>2</sup> Virgil, he soft and gentle, and would have thought Statius he had heard him thundering out

"Quæ superimposito moles geminata colosso."

Statius perhaps heats himself, as he proceeds generations somewhat hyperbolical; but undoubtedly would have been too hasty, if he had condemned straw for one sounding line. Dryden wanted and the first that occurred was imprest into the

What he wishes to say, he says at hazard "Gorbuduc,"<sup>3</sup> which he had never seen; give

\* Preface to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.—John

<sup>1</sup> "Tityre, tu, palatæ recubans sub tegmine fæ"

<sup>2</sup> See S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 407.

<sup>3</sup> Publius Papinius Statius. A Latin poet of the first Christ, of whose chief work, the *Thebais*, there have been and translations.

<sup>4</sup> This is the first line of the *Sylvæ* of Statius.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Matt. Arnold observes that this tragedy by S

ment of *Chapman's* versification; <sup>1</sup> and discovers, in the place to his "Fables," that he translated the first book of the "Iliad," without knowing what was in the second.<sup>2</sup> It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any great advances in literature. As having distinguished himself at Westminster under the tuition of Busby, who advanced his scholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-schools, he resided afterwards at Cambridge, it is not to be supposed, that his skill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common students; but his scholastick acquisitions seem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illustrious merely by his learning. He mentions but few books, and those such as lie in the beaten track of regular study; from which if ever he departs, he is in danger of losing himself in unknown regions.

In his Dialogue on the Drama, he pronounces with great confidence that the Latin tragedy of "Medea" is not Ovid's, because it is not sufficiently interesting and pathetick. He might have determined the question upon surer evidence; for it is quoted by Quintilian as the work of Seneca; and the only line which remains of Ovid's play, for one line left us, is not there to be found.<sup>3</sup> There was therefore

Lord Buckhurst, is the earliest known in English. It was surreptitiously published in 1565. 4to.

In the Dedication to the *Rival Ladies*, S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 135, Dryden cites the play as an example of rhyme whereas it is written in blank verse, and speaks of "Queen Gorboduc" instead of King. Yet Dryden had never seen this tragedy he might have remembered that it is King Gorboduc's niece, to whom the Hermit of Prague said, "that is, is." *Twelfth Night*, act iv. sc. 2.

Dryden, in his *Account of the "Annus Mirabilis,"* refers to Chapman's translation of Homer as written "in Alexandrines or verses of six feet, as it is in lines of fourteen syllables. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 47.

to *Fables*. S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 208.

His statement is far from clear, and it may therefore be well to recall



no need of the gravity of conjecture, or the discussion of plot or sentiment, to find what was already known upon higher authority than such discussions can ever reach.

His literature, though not always free from ostentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dressing it; or superficial, which, by what he gives, shews what he wanted; or erroneous, hastily collected, and negligently scattered.

Yet it cannot be said that his genius is ever unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languishes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and sparkle with illustrations. There is scarcely any science or faculty that does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes; every page discovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full possession of great stores of intellectual wealth. Of him that knows much, it is natural to suppose that he has read with diligence; yet I rather believe that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and various conversation, by a quick apprehension, a judicious selection, and a happy memory, a keen appetite of knowledge, and a powerful digestion; by vigilance that permitted nothing to pass without notice, and a habit of reflection that suffered nothing useful to be lost. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, always active, to which every understanding was proud to be associated, and of which every one solicited the regard, by an ambitious display of himself, had a more pleasant, perhaps a nearer way, to knowledge than by the silent progress of solitary reading. I do not suppose that he despised books, or intentionally neglected them; but that

the fact that one line (Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* viii. c. 5), or perhaps two (see Seneca,  *Suasor.* v. iii.), is all that remains to us of the lost tragedy of *Medea*, by Ovid, which is mentioned with praise by Tacitus (?) *Dialog de Oratoribus*, c. 12, and again by Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* X. i. 98. Seneca *Medea* is referred to by Quintilian *Inst. Or.* IX. ii. 8.

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f all this, however, if the proof be demanded, I will  
undertake to give in the course of the following and  
in my opinion has been found to be scattered over all  
works: and by him who thinks the question worth his  
ce, his works must be perused with very close attention.  
criticism, either didactic or defensive, pervades almost  
is prose, except those pages which he has devoted to  
patrons; but none of his professions were ever thought  
ous. They have not the formality of a settled style, in  
in the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The  
ses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled;  
y word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into  
roper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole  
ry, animated, and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what  
reat, is splendid. He may be thought to mention

*Phrenodia Augustalis*. A Funeral Poem. Sacred to the happy  
ory of King Charles II. S. S. D. vol. x. p. 78. *Alt. D.* vol. II  
5.

himself too frequently ; but while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Every thing is excused by the play of images and the spriteliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble ; though all seem careless, there is nothing harsh ; and though, since his earlier works, more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete.

He who writes much, will not easily escape a manner, such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always *another and the same*, he does not exhibit a second time the same elegancies in the same form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigour. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously ; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features, cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance.

From his prose,<sup>1</sup> however, Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise ; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of English literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the sentiments, and tuned the numbers of English poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts, and rugged metre, some advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham ; they had shewn that long discourses in rhyme grew more pleasing when they were broken into couplets, and that verse consisted not only in the number but the arrangement of syllables.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cunningham observes that Gray thought the prose of Dryden almost equal to his poetry, and that Fox's admiration of it was excessive ; he was indeed unwilling to use a word not found in Dryden.

But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample comprehension. More examples of more modes of composition were necessary for the establishment of regularity, and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastick and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and gross: and from a nice distinction of these different parts, arises a great part of the beauty of style. But if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of selection was little known to our authors; our speech lay before them in a heap of confusion, and every man took for every purpose what chance might offer him.

There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestick use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images: and words to which we are nearly strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves which they should transmit to things.

Those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose, had been rarely attempted; we had few elegances or flowers of speech, the roses had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have over-born the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were sheltered by the protection of authority. The new versification, as it was called, may be



considered as owing its establishment to Dryden; from whose time it is apparent that English poetry has had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness.

The affluence and comprehension of our language is very illustriously displayed in our poetical translations of Ancient Writers; a work which the French seem to relinquish in despair, and which we were long unable to perform with dexterity. Ben Jonson thought it necessary to copy Horace almost word by word;<sup>1</sup> Feltham, his contemporary and adversary, considers it as indispensably requisite in a translation to give line for line. It is said that Sandys,<sup>2</sup> whom Dryden calls the best versifier of the last age,<sup>3</sup> has struggled hard to comprise every book of his English Metamorphoses in the same number of verses with the original. Holyday had nothing in view but to shew that he understood his author, with so little regard to the grandeur of his diction, or the volubility of his numbers, that his metres can hardly be called verses; they cannot be read without reluctance, nor will the labour always be rewarded by understanding them.<sup>4</sup> Cowley saw that such copyers were a *servile race*; he asserted his liberty, and spread his wings so boldly that he left his authors. It was reserved for Dryden to fix the limits of poetical liberty, and give us just rules and examples of translation.

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impossible that the same modes of expression should always be elegant in both. While they run on together, the closest translation may be considered as the best; but when they divaricate, each must take its natural course.

<sup>1</sup> Ben Jonson (1574-1637), the great poet and dramatist, translated the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, and one or two of the *Odes*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid. supr.* p. 391.

<sup>3</sup> Preface to *Fables*, S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 269.

<sup>4</sup> For Scott's Note on Holyday, *vid. infr.* p. 463.

where correspondence cannot be obtained, it is necessary to be content with something equivalent. *Translation before, says Dryden, is not so loose as paraphrase, nor so close as metaphrase.*<sup>1</sup>

All polished languages have different styles: the simple, the diffuse, the lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice of style consists the resemblance which Dryden principally exacts from the translator. He is to exhibit the author's thoughts in such a dress of fiction as the author would have given them, had his language been English: rugged magnificence is not to be softened; hyperbolical ostentation is not to be repressed; nor sententious exclamation to have its point blunted. A translator is to be like his author: it is not his business to excel him.

The reasonableness of these rules seems sufficient for their vindication: and the effects produced by observing them were so happy, that I know not whether they were ever opposed but by Sir Edward Sherburne, a man whose learning was greater than his powers of poetry: and who, being better qualified to give the meaning than the spirit of Seneca, has introduced his version of three tragedies by a defence of close translation. The authority of Horace, such the new translators cited in defence of their practice, has, by a judicious explanation, taken fairly from them; it reason wants not Horace to support it.

It seldom happens that all the necessary causes concur to any great effect: will is wanting to power, or power to will,

<sup>1</sup> On the distinction of metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation, see the Preface to Ovid's *Epistles*. S. S. D. vol. xii. p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Edward Sherburne (1618-1702), a Catholic and Royalist poet, was with the king at Edgehill. In 1648 he translated Seneca's *deus*, and his answer to Lucullus's question "Why, good men suffer misfortunes, seeing there is a divine providence." In 1651 he published *Poems and translations*. Chiefly noted for his studious life and his Library. He held some small office in the Ordinance, but fell into debt and poverty in consequence of political troubles.

or both are impeded by external obstructions. The exigences in which Dryden was condemned to pass his life, are reasonably supposed to have blasted his genius, to have driven out his works in a state of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have supplied.

Poverty, like other rigid powers, is sometimes too hastily accused. If the excellence of Dryden's works was lessened by his indigence, their number was increased; and I know not how it will be proved, that if he had written less he would have undergone the toil of an author, if he had not been solicited by something more pressing than the love of praise.

But as is said by his "Sebastian,"<sup>1</sup>

"What had been, is unknown; what is, appears."

We know that Dryden's several productions were so many successive expedients for his support; his plays were therefore often borrowed, and his poems were almost all occasional.

In an occasional performance no height of excellence can be expected from any mind, however fertile in itself, and however stored with acquisitions. He whose work is general and arbitrary, has the choice of his matter, and takes that which his inclination and his studies have best qualified him to display and decorate. He is at liberty to delay his publication, till he has satisfied his friends and himself; till he has reformed his first thoughts by subsequent examination; and polished away those faults which the precipitance of ardent composition is likely to leave behind it. Virgil is related to have poured out a great number of lines in the morning, and to have passed the day in reducing them to fewer.

The occasional poet is circumscribed by the narrowness of

<sup>1</sup> Act iv. sc. 3. S. S. D. vol. vii. p. 440.

subject. Whatever can happen to man has happened often, that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have most of us been married; and many have died before us, that our deaths can supply a few materials for a poet. In the fate of princes the publick has an interest; and what happens to them of good or evil, the poets have always considered as business for the muse. But after so many inauguratory gratulations, nuptial hymns, and funeral dirges, he must be highly favoured by nature, or by fortune, who says any thing not said before. Even war and conquest, however splendid, suggest no new images; the triumphal chariot of a victorious monarch can be decked only with those ornaments that have graced his predecessors.

Not only matter but time is wanting. The poem must not be delayed till the occasion is forgotten. The lucky moments of animated imagination cannot be attended; elegances and illustrations cannot be multiplied by gradual accumulation: the composition must be dispatched while conversation is yet busy, and admiration fresh; and haste to be made, lest some other event should lay hold upon mankind.

Occasional composition may however secure to a writer the praise both of learning and facility; for they cannot be the effect of long study, and must be furnished immediately from the treasures of the mind.

The death of Cromwell<sup>1</sup> was the first publick event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroick stanzas have beauties and defects; the thoughts are vigorous, and though not always proper, shew a mind replete with ideas; the numbers are smooth, and the diction, if not altogether correct, is elegant and easy.

Davenant<sup>2</sup> was perhaps at this time his favourite author

<sup>1</sup> Ald. D. vol. i. p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Vid. supr.* p. 387.



though Gondibert never appears to have been popular; and from Davenant he learned to please his ear with the stanza of four lines alternately rhymed.

Dryden very early formed his versification: there are in this early production no traces of Donne's or Jonson's ruggedness; but he did not so soon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. In his verses on the Restoration, he says of the King's exile,

"He, toss'd by Fate—  
Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age,  
But found his life too true a pilgrimage."<sup>1</sup>

And afterwards, to shew how virtue and wisdom are increased by adversity, he makes this remark:

"Well might the ancient poets then confer  
On Night the honour'd name of *counsellor*,  
Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,  
We light alone in dark afflictions find."<sup>2</sup>

His praise of Monk's dexterity comprises such a cluster of thoughts unallied to one another, as will not elsewhere be easily found:<sup>3</sup>

" 'Twas Monk, whom Providence design'd to loose  
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.  
The blessed saints that watch'd this turning scene,  
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,  
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,  
Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.  
Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore  
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.  
With ease such fond chimæras we pursue,  
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue:

<sup>1</sup> *Astræa Redux*, line 51; S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 35; Ald. D. vol. i. p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* line 93; S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 37; Ald. D. vol. i. p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* line 151; S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 40; Ald. D. vol. i. p. 19.

But, when ourselves to action we betake,  
 It shuns the mint like gold that chymists make ;  
 How hard was then his task, at once to be  
 What in the body natural we see !  
 Man's Architect distinctly did ordain  
 The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,  
 Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense  
 The springs of motion from the seat of sense.  
 'Twas not the hasty product of a day,  
 But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay.  
 He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,  
 Would let them play a-while upon the hook.  
 Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,  
 At first embracing what it straight doth crush.  
 Wise leaches will not vain receipts obtrude,  
 While growing pains pronounce the humours crude ;  
 Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,  
 Till some safe crisis authorize their skill."

He had not yet learned, indeed he never learned well, to bear the improper use of mythology. After having re-  
 vered the heathen deities for their care,

" With *Alga* who the sacred altar strows ?  
 To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes ;  
 A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain,  
 A ram to you, ye Tempests of the Main." <sup>1</sup>

tells us, in the language of religion,

" Prayer storm'd the skies, and ravish'd Charles from thence,  
 As heaven itself is took by violence." <sup>2</sup>

and afterwards mentions one of the most awful passages of  
 red History.

Other conceits there are, too curious to be quite omitted ;

*Astrea Redux*, line 119 ; S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 38 ; Ald. D. vol. i.  
 8.

*Ibid.* line 143 ; S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 39 ; Ald. D. vol. i. p. 19.

"For by example most we sinn'd before,  
And, glass-like, clearness mix'd with frailty bore."<sup>1</sup>

How far he was yet from thinking it necessary to found his sentiments on Nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles:

"The winds, that never moderation knew,  
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;  
Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge  
Their straiten'd lungs.—<sup>2</sup>  
It is no longer motion cheats your view;  
As you meet it, the land approacheth you;  
The land returns, and in the white it wears  
The marks of penitence and sorrow bears."

I know not whether this fancy, however little be its value, was not borrowed. A French poet read to Malherbe<sup>3</sup> some verses, in which he represents France as moving out of its place to receive the king. "Though this," said Malherbe, "was in my time, I do not remember it."

His poem on the "Coronation" has a more even tenour of thought. Some lines deserve to be quoted:

"You have already quench'd sedition's brand,  
And zeal, that burnt it, only warms the land;  
The jealous sects that durst not trust their cause  
So far from their own will as to the laws,  
Him for their umpire, and their synod take,  
And their appeal alone to Cæsar make."<sup>4</sup>

Here may be found one particle of that old versification, of which, I believe, in all his works, there is not another:

<sup>1</sup> *Astræa Redux*, line 207; S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 44; Ald. D. vol. i. p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, line 242; S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 46; Ald. D. vol. i. p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> François de Malherbe (1555-1628), a famous French poet, the first man, says the great critic, Boileau, who in France wrote verse with correctness.—MATT. ARNOLD.

<sup>4</sup> *To His Sacred Majesty, A Panegyric on His Coronation*, 16 S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 57. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 26.

"Nor is it tiny, at our huge mine,  
Creates that joy, but full of mine."

the verses to the Lord Chancellor, written two years  
wards, is a conceit so ingenious as the first view, that  
could have attempted it: and so successfully answered,  
though at last it gives the reader more perplexity than  
ure, and seems hardly worth the study that it costs.  
must be valued as a proof of a mind as close subtle  
comprehensive:¹

In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,  
Until the earth seems join'd with the sky:  
So in this hemisphere our utmost view  
Is only bounded by our king and you:  
Our sight is limited where you are join'd,  
And beyond that no farther heaven can find.  
So well your virtues do with his agree,  
That, though your orbs of different greatness be,  
Yet both are for each other's use dispos'd,  
His to enclose, and yours to be enclos'd.  
Nor could another in your room have been,  
Except an emptiness had come between."

the comparison of the Chancellor to the Indies leaves  
resemblance too far behind it:

"And as the Indies were not found before  
Those rich perfumes which from the happy shore  
The winds upon their balmy wings convey'd,  
Whose guilty sweetness first their world betray'd;  
So by your counsels we are brought to view  
A new and undiscover'd world in you."²

here is another comparison, for there is little else in

line 69. Mr. Milnes points out that this accent on the last syllable  
 customary in the sixteenth century, and supports his opinion by a  
 nce to Ben Jonson's *English Grammar*, p. 55, ed. 1640.

to the Lord Chancellor Hyde. Presented on New Year's Day,

S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 63; Ald. D. vol. i. p. 32.

ld. D. vol. i. p. 34.



the poem, of which, though perhaps it cannot be explained into plain prosaic meaning, the mind perceives enough to be delighted, and readily forgives its obscurity, for its magnificence :

"How strangely active are the arts of peace,  
Whose restless motions less than wars do cease :  
Peace is not freed from labour, but from noise ;  
And war more force, but not more pains employs :  
Such is the mighty swiftness of your mind,  
That, like the earth's, it leaves off sense behind,  
While you so smoothly turn and rowl our sphere,  
That rapid motion does but rest appear.  
For as in nature's swiftness, with the throng  
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,  
All seems at rest to the deluded eye,  
Mov'd by the soul of the same harmony :  
So carry'd on by our unwearied care,  
We rest in peace, and yet in motion share."<sup>1</sup>

To this succeed four lines, which perhaps afford Dryden's first attempt at those penetrating remarks on human nature, for which he seems to have been peculiarly formed :

"Let envy then those crimes within you see,  
From which the happy never must be free ;  
Envy that does with misery reside,  
The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride."<sup>2</sup>

Into this poem he seems to have collected all his powers ; and after this he did not often bring upon his anvil such stubborn and unmanageable thoughts ; but, as a specimen of his abilities to unite the most unsociable matter, he has concluded with lines, of which I think not myself obliged to tell the meaning :

"Yet unimpair'd with labours, or with time,  
Your age but seems to a new youth to climb.

<sup>1</sup> Ald. D. vol. i. p. 35, lines 105-118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35, line 118.

Thus heavenly bodies do our time measure.  
And measure change, but share no part of it :  
And still it shall without a weight increase.  
Like this new year, whose motions never cease.  
For since the glorious course you have begun  
Is led by Charles, as that is by the sun.  
It must both weightless and immortal prove.  
Because the centre of it is above.

1 the "Annus Mirabilis" <sup>2</sup> he returned to the quatrain.  
2h from that time he totally quitted, perhaps from this  
3ience of its inconvenience, for he complains of its  
4ulty. This is one of his greatest attempts. He had  
5ects equal to his abilities, a great naval war, and the  
6 of London. Battles have always been described in  
7ick poetry; but a sea-fight and artillery had yet  
8othing of novelty. New arts are long in the world  
9re poets describe them; for they borrow everything  
10 their predecessors, and commonly derive very little  
11 nature or from life. Boileau was the first French  
12er that had ever hazarded in verse the mention of  
13ern war, or the effects of gunpowder.<sup>3</sup> We, who are  
14 afraid of novelty, had already possession of those  
15dful images: Waller had described a sea-fight. Milton  
16 not yet transferred the invention of fire-arms to the  
17llicious angels.

his poem is written with great diligence, yet does not answer the expectation raised by such subjects and a writer. With the stanza of Davenant he has some as his vein of parenthesis, and incidental digressions, stops his narrative for a time, *scilicet*, he general facts is, that he *affords* them *with* the *best* of

Ald. D. vol. I. p. 31, inner. 4. 1. 14

*The Year of the Flood* . . . . . A. A. Milne . . . . . A. A. Milne . . . . .  
 S. S. B. vol. 23

Mr. Wilson joins us this morning and we will have a very interesting and profitable session. The session will be held in the morning and will be held in the morning.

description, and does not so much impress scenes upon the fancy, as deduce consequences and make comparisons.

The initial stanzas have rather too much resemblance to the first lines of Waller's poem on the war with Spain; perhaps such a beginning is natural, and could not be avoided without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden might take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome,<sup>1</sup> *Orbem jam totum*, &c.

Of the king collecting his navy, he says,

"It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,  
His awful summons they so soon obey;  
So hear the scaly herds when Proteus blows,  
And so to pasture follow through the sea."<sup>2</sup>

It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two first lines seriously, and that some wag had added the two latter in burlesque. Who would expect the lines that immediately follow, which are indeed perhaps indelicately hyperbolical, but certainly in a mode totally different?

"To see this fleet upon the ocean move,  
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;  
And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,  
For tapers made two glaring comets rise."<sup>3</sup>

The description of the attempt at Bergen will afford a very compleat specimen of the descriptions in this poem:

"And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught  
With all the riches of the rising sun:  
And precious sand from southern climates brought,  
The fatal regions where the war begun.

<sup>1</sup> The *Pharsalia* of Lucan, a Latin poet of the first century after Christ.  
—MATT. ARNOLD.

<sup>2</sup> Ald. *D.* vol. i. p. 55, line 57.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* line 66.

Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,  
 Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coast they bring :  
 Then first the North's cold bosom spices bore,  
 And winter brooded on the eastern spring.

By the rich scent we found our perfum'd prey,  
 Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert lie :  
 And round about their murdering cannon lay,  
 At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,  
 The English undertake th' unequal war :  
 Seven ships alone, by which the port is barr'd,  
 Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those :  
 These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy :  
 And to such height their frantic passion grows,  
 That what both love, both hazard to destroy :

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,  
 And now their odours arm'd against them fly :  
 Some preciously by shatter'd porcelain fall,  
 And some by aromatic splinters die.

And though by tempests of the prize bereft,  
 In heaven's inclemency some ease we find :  
 Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,  
 And only yielded to the seas and wind."<sup>1</sup>

In this manner is the sublime too often mingled with the ridiculous. The Dutch seek a shelter for a wealthy fleet: this surely needed no illustration; yet they must, not like all the rest of mankind on the same occasion, but like *hunted castors*; and they might with strict propriety be hunted; for we winded them by our noses—their *perfumes* betrayed them. The *Husband* and the *lover*, though of more dignity than the *Castor*, are images too domestick to mingle properly with the horrors of war. The two quatrains that follow are worthy of the author.

<sup>1</sup> Ald. D. vol. i. pp. 57, 58.



The account of the different sensations with which the two fleets retired, when the night parted them, is one of the fairest flowers of English poetry.

"The night comes on, we eager to pursue  
The combat still, and they asham'd to leave :  
'Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,  
And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.

In th' English fleet each ship resounds with joy,  
And loud applause of their great leader's fame :  
In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,  
And, slumbering, smile at the imagin'd flame.

Not so the Holland fleet, who, tir'd and done,  
Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie ;  
Faint sweats all down their mighty members run,  
(Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply.)

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,  
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore :  
Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead ;  
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more."<sup>1</sup>

It is a general rule in poetry, that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak an universal language. This rule is still stronger with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge; and of this kind, certainly, is technical navigation. Yet Dryden was of opinion that a sea-fight ought to be described in the nautical language; and *certainly*, says he, *as those who in a logical disputation keep to general terms would hide a fallacy, so those who do it in any poetical description would veil their ignorance.*

Let us then appeal to experience; for by experience at last we learn as well what will please as what will profit.

<sup>1</sup> Verses 68-71. Ald. D. vol. i. pp. 65, 66.

the battle, his terms seem to have been blown away :  
he deals them liberally in the dock :

" So here some pick out bullets from the side.  
Some drive old *shots* thro' each *seam* and *rift* :  
Their left-hand does the *calling-iron* guide.  
The rattling *mallet* with the right they lift.

With boiling pitch another near at hand  
(From friendly Sweden brought, the *worms* *cast* :  
Which, well laid o'er, the salt-sea waves withstand  
And shake them from the rising beak in drops.

Some the *gall'd* ropes with dawby *marling* blind.  
Or sear-cloth masts with strong *tar-parking* coats :  
To try new *shrouds* one mounts into the wind.  
And one below, their ease or stiffness notes."

suppose here is not one term which every reader does  
wish away.

is digression to the original and progress of navigation,  
his prospect of the advancement which it shall receive  
the Royal Society, then newly instituted, may be con-  
sidered as an example seldom equalled of seasonable excur-  
sion and artful return.

the line, however, leaves me discontented ; he says, that  
the help of the philosophers,

" Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,  
By which remotest regions are allied.—" <sup>2</sup>

which he is constrained to explain in a note, *By a more  
exact measure of longitude*. It had better become Dryden's  
task and genius to have laboured science into poetry,  
have shewn, by explaining longitude, that verse did not  
want the ideas of philosophy.

his description of the Fire is painted by resolute medita-  
tion of a mind better formed to reason than to feel.

<sup>1</sup> Ald. D. vol. i. p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 81.

The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concordant distress, is one of the most dreadful spectacles which this world can offer to human eyes; yet it seems to raise little emotion in the breast of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from street to street, with now a reflection, and now a simile, till at last he meets the king, for whom he makes a speech, rather tedious in a time so busy; and then follows again the progress of the fire.

There are, however, in this part some passages that deserve attention; as in the beginning:

“The diligence of trades and noiseful gain  
And luxury more late asleep were laid;  
All was the night's, and in her silent reign  
No sound the rest of Nature did invade  
In this deep quiet—”<sup>1</sup>

The expression “All was the night's” is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Virgil's line,<sup>2</sup>

“*Omnia noctis erant placida composta quiete,*”

that he might have concluded better,

“*Omnia noctis erant.*”

The following quatrain is vigorous and animated:

“The ghosts of traytors from the bridge descend  
With bold fanatick spectres to rejoice;  
About the fire into a dance they bend,  
And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ald. *D.* vol. i. p. 91, line 862.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Christie points out that this line is not by Virgil, but by Varro, as quoted by Seneca (*Controversies*, iii. 16) as excellent; and that, in the same passage of Seneca, Ovid is said to have made the remark attributed by Johnson to Seneca, while Virgil has, in the *Æneid* (viii. 26), lines in imitation of Varro's. Globe ed. *Dryden*. Note on p. 74. *de Mirabilis*, v. 216.

<sup>3</sup> P. 92, line 890.

His prediction of the improvements which shall be made in the new city, is elegant and poetical, and with an event which Poets cannot always boast, has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a simile that might have better been omitted.

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, seems not yet fully to have formed his versification, or settled his system of propriety.

From this time, he addicted himself almost wholly to the stage, to which, says he, *my genius never much inclined me*, merely as the most profitable market for poetry. By writing tragedies in rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers. According to the opinion of *Harte*,<sup>1</sup> who had studied his works with great attention, he settled his principles of versification in 1676, when he produced the play of *Aureng Zeb*; <sup>2</sup> and according to his own account of the short time in which he wrote "*Tyrannick Love*,"<sup>3</sup> and the "*State of Innocence*,"<sup>4</sup> he soon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactness.

Rhyme has been so long banished from the theatre, that we know not its effect upon the passions of an audience; at it has this convenience, that sentences stand more independent on each other, and striking passages are therefore easily selected and retained. Thus the description of fight in the "*Indian Emperor*,"<sup>5</sup> and the rise and fall of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Walter Harte (died 1774), was tutor to Lord Chesterfield's son, author of a *History of Gustavus Adolphus*, and many sermons and poems. He is remembered now only as having been intimate with Pope, and described by Johnson "as a scholar, and a man of the most commendable talents he had ever known." Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. ii. p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> S. S. D. vol. v. p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> *Tyrannic Love, or Royal Martyr*, S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 369.

<sup>4</sup> *The State of Innocence*, an opera. S. S. D. vol. v. p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Act iii. sc. 2. S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 360.



empire in the "Conquest of Granada,"<sup>1</sup> are more frequently repeated than any lines in "All for Love,"<sup>2</sup> or "Don Sebastian."<sup>3</sup>

To search his plays for vigorous sallies, and sententious elegances, or to fix the dates of any little pieces which he wrote by chance, or by solicitation, were labour too tedious and minute.

His dramatic labours did not so wholly absorb his thoughts, but that he promulgated the laws of translation in a preface to the English Epistles of Ovid; one of which he translated himself, and another in conjunction with the Earl of Mulgrave.

Absalom and Achitophel<sup>4</sup> is a work so well known, that particular criticism is superfluous. If it be considered as a poem political and controversial, it will be found to comprise all the excellences of which the subject is susceptible: acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of sentiment, happy turn of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition.

It is not, however, without faults; some lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreligiously licentious. The original structure of the poem was defective; allegories drawn to great length will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David.

The subject had likewise another inconvenience: it admitted little imagery or description, and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedious; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest.

<sup>1</sup> S. S. D. vol. iv. p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. v. p. 305.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ix. p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> Ald. D. vol. i. p. 119.

As an approach to historical truth was necessary, the action and catastrophe were not in the poet's power: there is therefore an unpleasant disproportion between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formed out of many sects various in their principles, but agreeing in their purpose of mischief, formidable for their numbers, and strong by their supports, while the king's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are set forth to view; but when expectation is at the height, the king makes a speech, and

"Henceforth a series of new times began."

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of brass, which vanishes at once into air, when the destined knight blows his horn before it?

In the second part,<sup>2</sup> written by Tate,<sup>3</sup> there is a long insertion, which, for poignancy of satire, exceeds any part of the former. Personal resentment, though no laudable motive to satire, can add great force to general principles. Self-love is a busy prompter.

The "Medal,"<sup>4</sup> written upon the same principles with *Absalom and Achitophel*, but upon a narrower plan, gives less pleasure, though it discovers equal abilities in the writer. The superstructure cannot extend beyond the foundation; a single character or incident cannot furnish as many ideas, as a series of events, or multiplicity of agents. This poem therefore, since time has left it to itself, is not much read, nor perhaps generally understood, yet it abounds with touches both of humorous and serious satire. The picture of a man whose propensities to

<sup>1</sup> *Absalom and Achitophel*, line 1028. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> Nahum Tate. See Malone, vol. i. p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> *The Medal, a Satire against Sedition*. 1682. S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 411.

mischief are such, that his best actions are but inability of wickedness, is very skilfully delineated and strongly coloured.

"Power was his aim: but, thrown from that pretence,  
 The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,  
 And malice reconcil'd him to his Prince.  
 Him, in the anguish of his soul, he serv'd;  
 Rewarded faster still than he deserv'd:  
 Behold him now exalted into trust;  
 His counsels oft convenient, seldom just.  
 Ev'n in the most sincere advice he gave,  
 He had a grudging still to be a knave.  
 The frauds he learnt in his fanatic years,  
 Made him uneasy in his lawful gears:  
 At least as little honest as he cou'd  
 And, like white witches, mischievously good.  
 To this first bias, longingly, he leans;  
 And rather would be great by wicked means."<sup>1</sup>

The "Threnodia,"<sup>2</sup> which, by a term I am afraid neither authorized nor analogical, he calls "Augustalis," is not among his happiest productions. Its first and obvious defect is the irregularity of its metre, to which the ears of that age, however, were accustomed. What is worse, it has neither tenderness nor dignity, it is neither magnificent nor pathetick. He seems to look round him for images which he cannot find, and what he has he distorts by endeavouring to enlarge them. He is, he says, *petrified with grief*; but the marble sometimes relents, and trickles in a joke.

"The sons of art all med'cines try'd,  
 And every noble remedy apply'd;  
 With emulation each essay'd  
 His utmost skill; *nay more they pray'd*:  
 Was never losing game with better conduct play'd."<sup>3</sup>

He had been a little inclined to merriment before

<sup>1</sup> Ald. D. vol. ii. p. 57, line 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Threnodia Augustalis*. Ald. D. vol. ii. p. 93.    <sup>3</sup> Lines 160-164.

on the prayers of a nation for their dying sovereign, nor was he serious enough to keep heathen fables out of his ligion.

“ With him th’ innumerable croud of armed prayers  
Knock’d at the gates of heaven, and knock’d aloud ;  
*The first well-meaning rude petitioners,*

All for his life assail’d the throne,  
All would have brib’d the skies by offering up their own.  
So great a throng not heaven itself could bar ;  
’Twas almost borne by force *as in the giants war.*

The prayers, at least, for his reprieve were heard ;  
His death, like Hezekiah’s, was deferr’d.”<sup>1</sup>

There is throughout the composition a desire of splendor without wealth. In the conclusion he seems too much eased with the prospect of the new reign to have lamented his old master with much sincerity.

He did not miscarry in this attempt for want of skill either in lyric or elegiac poetry. His poem *on the death Mrs. Killigrew*,<sup>2</sup> is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with torrent of enthusiasm. *Fervet immensusque ruit*.<sup>3</sup> All the stanzas indeed are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond ; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.

In his first ode for Cecilia’s day,<sup>4</sup> which is lost in the splendour of the second,<sup>5</sup> there are passages which would have dignified any other poet. The first stanza is vigorous

<sup>1</sup> Ald. *D.* vol. ii. p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 279.

<sup>3</sup> *Horace, Odes*, IV. ii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Ald. *D.* vol. iii. p. 3. Written for the festival, 1687. Mr. Saintsbury observes (*S. S. D.* vol. xi. p. 171) that “In Dryden’s copy of the *verser*, preserved at Trinity College, Cambridge, the note, ‘*Ground-work for a song on St. Cecilia’s Day*,’ is set against *F. Q.* VII. vii. 12.”

<sup>5</sup> *Alexander’s Feast, or the Power of Music*, an ode in honour of St. Cecilia’s Day, was written for the festival in 1697. Ald. *D.* vol. iii. 12.



and elegant, though the word *diapason* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another.

"From harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
 This universal frame began :  
 When nature underneath a heap of jarring atoms lay,  
 And could not heave her head,  
 The tuneful voice was heard from high,  
 Arise ye more than dead.  
 Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,  
 In order to their stations leap,  
 And musick's power obey.  
 From harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
 This universal frame began :  
 From harmony to harmony  
 Through all the compass of the notes it ran,  
 The diapason closing full in man."<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion is likewise striking, but it includes an image so awful in itself, that it can owe little to poetry; and I could wish the antithesis of *musick untuning* had found some other place.

"As from the power of sacred lays  
 The spheres began to move,  
 And sung the great Creator's praise  
 To all the bless'd above.  
 So when the last and dreadful hour  
 This crumbling pageant shall devour,  
 The trumpet shall be heard on high,  
 The dead shall live, the living die,  
 And musick shall untune the sky."<sup>2</sup>

Of his skill in Elegy he has given a specimen in his "Eleonora,"<sup>3</sup> of which the following lines discover their author.

<sup>1</sup> Ald. D. vol. iii. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Eleonora*. A Panegyric Poem, dedicated to the memory of the late Countess of Abingdon, 1692. This lady was the daughter of Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, and wife of James Bertie, first Earl of Abingdon, and died May 31st, 1691. S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 128.

" Though all these rare endowments of the mind  
 Were in a narrow space of life confin'd,  
 The figure was with full perfection crown'd ;  
 Though not so large an orb, as truly round :  
 As when in glory, through the public place,  
 The spoils of conquer'd nations were to pass,  
 And but one day for triumph was allow'd,  
 The consul was constrain'd his pomp to crowd ;  
 And so the swift procession hurry'd on,  
 That all, though not distinctly, might be shown :  
 So in the straiten'd bounds of life confin'd,  
 She gave but glimpses of her glorious mind :  
 And multitudes of virtues pass'd along ;  
 Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng,  
 Ambitious to be seen, and then make room  
 For greater multitudes that were to come.  
 Yet unemploy'd no minute slipp'd away ;  
 Moments were precious in so short a stay.  
 The haste of heaven to have her was so great,  
 That some were single acts, though each compleat ;  
 And every act stood ready to repeat." <sup>1</sup> }

This piece, however, is not without its faults ; there is so  
 much likeness in the initial comparison, that there is no il-  
 lation. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was  
 lamented.

" As when some great and gracious monarch dies,  
 Soft whispers, first, and mournful murmurs rise  
 Among the sad attendants ; then the sound  
 Soon gathers voice, and spreads the news around,  
 Through town and country, till the dreadful blast  
 Is blown to distant colonies at last ;  
 Who, then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain,  
 For his long life, and for his happy reign :  
 So slowly by degrees, unwilling fame  
 Did matchless Eleonora's fate proclaim,  
 Till publick as the loss the news became." <sup>2</sup> }

<sup>1</sup> Ald. D. vol. ii. p. 292, lines 270-290.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. lines 1-11.

This is little better than to say in praise of a shrub, that it is as green as a tree, or of a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river waters a country.

Dryden confesses that he did not know the lady whom he celebrates; the praise being therefore inevitably general, fixes no impression upon the reader, nor excites any tendency to love, nor much desire of imitation. Knowledge of the subject is to the poet, what durable materials are to the architect.

The "*Religio Laici*,"<sup>1</sup> which borrows its title from "*Religio Medici*" of Browne,<sup>2</sup> is almost the only of Dryden which can be considered as a voluntary effort in this, therefore, it might be hoped, that the full effect of his genius would be found. But unhappily the specimen of metrical disputation.

"And this unpolish'd rugged verse I choose  
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose"

This, however, is a composition of great elegant kind, in which the familiar is very properly mingled with the solemn, and the grave with the humorous; the metre has neither weakened the force, nor diminished the spicuity of argument; nor will it be easily found an example equally happy of this middle style, which, though prosaick in some parts, rises in others, and neither towers to the skies nor sinks to the ground.

Of the same kind, or not far distant from it, is

<sup>1</sup> *Religio Laici, or a Layman's Faith*, vol. x. p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Religio Medici*. London, 1642. Reprinted by Sir Kenelm Digby. Sir Thomas Browne, Norwich. He wrote also *Christian Morals*. Published an edition, with a life of Browne), critical works.

<sup>3</sup> Ald. D. vol. ii. p. 92.

**"Hind and Panther,"**<sup>1</sup> the longest of all Dryden's original poems; an allegory intended to comprize and to decide the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants. The scheme of the work is injudicious and incommodious; for what can be more absurd than that one beast should counsel another to rest her faith upon a pope and council? He seems well enough skilled in the usual topicks of argument, endeavours to shew the necessity of an infallible judge, and reproaches the Reformers with want of unity; but is weak enough to ask, why since we see without knowing how, we may not have an infallible judge without knowing where.

The *Hind* at one time is afraid to drink at the common brook, because she may be worried; but walking home with the *Panther*, talks by the way of the *Nicene Fathers*, and at last declares herself to be the Catholic church.

This absurdity was very properly ridiculed in the "*City Mouse*" and "*Country Mouse*" of *Montague* and *Prior*; and in the detection and censure of the incongruity of the fiction, chiefly consists the value of their performance, which, whatever reputation it might obtain by the help of temporary passions, seems to readers almost a century distant, not very forcible or animated.

Pope, whose judgment was perhaps a little bribed by the subject, used to mention this poem as the most correct specimen of Dryden's versification. It was indeed written when he had completely formed his manner, and may be supposed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate scheme of metre.

We may therefore reasonably infer, that he did not approve the perpetual uniformity which confines the sense to couplets, since he has broken his lines in the initial paragraph.

<sup>1</sup> S. S. D. vol. i. p. 85. Ald. D. vol. ii. p. 113.



"A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang'd,  
 Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang'd;  
 Without unspotted, innocent within,  
 She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.  
 Yet had she oft been chac'd with horns and hounds  
 And Scythian shafts, and many winged wounds  
 Aim'd at her heart; was often forc'd to fly,  
 And doom'd to death, though fated not to die."<sup>1</sup>

These lines are lofty, elegant, and musical, notwithstanding the interruption of the pause, of which the effect is rather increase of pleasure by variety, than offence by ruggedness.

To the first part it was his intention, he says, *to give the majestick turn of heroick poesy*; <sup>2</sup> and perhaps he might have executed his design not unsuccessfully, had not an opportunity of satire, which he cannot forbear, fallen sometimes in his way. The character of a Presbyterian, whose emblem is the *Wolf*, is not very heroically majestick.

"More haughty than the rest, the wolfish race  
 Appear with belly gaunt and famish'd face:  
 Never was so deform'd a beast of grace.  
 His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,  
 Close clapp'd for shame; but his rough crest he rears,  
 And pricks up his predestinating ears."<sup>3</sup>

His general character of the other sorts of beasts that never go to church, though spritely and keen, has, however, not much of heroick poesy,

"These are the chief; to number o'er the rest,  
 And stand like Adam naming every beast,  
 Were weary work; nor will the Muse describe  
 A slimy-born, and sun-begotten tribe;  
 Who, far from steeples and their sacred sound,  
 In fields their sullen conventicles found.

<sup>1</sup> Ald. *D.* vol. ii. p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to *The Hind and the Panther*, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 125.

These gross, half-animated, lumps I leave ;  
 Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive ;  
 But if they think at all, 'tis sure no higher  
 Than matter, put in motion, may aspire ;  
 Souls that can scarce ferment their mass of clay }  
 So drossy, so divisible are they,  
 As would but serve pure bodies for allay : }  
 Such souls as shards produce, such beetle things  
 As only buz to heaven with evening wings ;  
 Strike in the dark, offending but by chance ;  
 Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance.  
 They know not beings, and but hate a name ;  
 To them the Hind and Panther are the same." <sup>1</sup>

One more instance, and that taken from the narrative  
 part, where style was more in his choice, will show how  
 readily he kept his resolution of heroick dignity.

" For when the herd, suffic'd, did late repair  
 To ferny heaths, and to their forest laire,  
 She made a mannerly excuse to stay,  
 Proffering the Hind to wait her half the way :  
 That, since the sky was clear, an hour of talk  
 Might help her to beguile the tedious walk.  
 With much good-will the motion was embrac'd,  
 To chat awhile on their adventures past :  
 Nor had the grateful Hind so soon forgot  
 Her friend and fellow-sufferer in the plot.  
 Yet, wondering how of late she grew estrang'd,  
 Her forehead cloudy and her count'nance chang'd,  
 She thought this hour th' occasion would present  
 To learn her secret cause of discontent,  
 Which well she hop'd, might be with ease redress'd, }  
 Considering her a well-bred civil beast,  
 And more a gentlewoman than the rest. }  
 After some common talk what rumours ran,  
 The lady of the spotted muff began." <sup>2</sup>

The second and third parts he professes to have reduced

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* D. vol. ii. p. 130, lines 308-326.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 139, lines 554-572.

to diction more familiar and more suitable to dispute and conversation; the difference is not, however, very easily perceived: the first has familiar, and the two others have sonorous, lines. The original incongruity runs through the whole; the king is now *Cæsar*, and now the *Lyon*; and the name *Pan* is given to the Supreme Being.

But when this constitutional absurdity is forgiven, the poem must be confessed to be written with great smoothness of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controversy is embellished with pointed sentences, diversified by illustrations, and enlivened by sallies of invective. Some of the facts to which allusions are made, are now become obscure, and perhaps there may be many satirical passages little understood.

As it was by its nature a work of defiance, a composition which would naturally be examined with the utmost acrimony of criticism, it was probably laboured with uncommon attention; and there are, indeed, few negligences in the subordinate parts. The original impropriety, and the subsequent unpopularity of the subject, added to the ridiculousness of its first elements, has sunk it into neglect; but it may be usefully studied, as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument suffers little from the metre.

In the poem on "The Birth of the Prince of Wales,"<sup>1</sup> nothing is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and that insensibility of the precipice on which the king was then standing, which the laureate apparently shared with the rest of the courtiers. A few months cured him of controversy, dismissed him from court, and made him again a play-wright and translator.

Of Juvenal there had been a translation by Stapylton.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. S. D. vol. x. p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Robert Stapleton, (buried 1669 in Westminster Abbey) published *Juvenal*, 1647, and afterwards various translations and dramatic pieces;

l another by Holyday: "neither of them is very poetical; pylon is more smooth, and Holyday's is more esteemed the learning of his notes. A new version was proposed the poets of that time, and undertaken by them in conjunction. The main design was conducted by Dryden, whose reputation was such that no man was unwilling to ve the Muses under him.

The general character of this translation will be given, when it is said to preserve the wit, but to want the dignity the original. The peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture gaiety and stateliness, of pointed sentences and declamatory grandeur. His points have not been neglected; but grandeur none of the band seemed to consider as necessary to be imitated, except Creech,<sup>1</sup> who undertook the rteenth satire. It is therefore perhaps possible to give etter representation of that great satirist, even in those rts which Dryden himself has translated, some passages epted, which will never be excelled.

l, 1669, according to the books of the Stationers' Company, *The yal Choice*.

Dryden, in the *Essay on Satire*, after quoting Holyday, proceeds: Thus far that learned critic, Barten Holyday, whose interpretation 1 illustrations of Juvenal are as excellent as the verse of his translation and his English are lame and pitiful." And Scott notes: "he learned Barten Holyday was born at Oxford, in the end of the six-nth century." Wood says he was second to none for his poetry and blime fancy, and brings in witness his "smooth translation of rough raius," made before he was twenty years of age. He wrote a play lled *Technogamia, or the Marriage of the Arts*, which was acted at ristchurch College before James I., and, though extremely dull and dantic, was ill-received by his majesty. Holyday's version of *Juvenal* as not published till after his death, when, in 1673, it was inscribed to e dean and canons of Christchurch. As he had adopted the desperate solution of comprising every Latin line within an English one, the odern reader has often reason to complain with the embarrassed entleman in the *Critic*, "that the interpreter is the harder to be understood of the two." S. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 96.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Creech (1659-1700), translator and editor of *Lucretius*, &c.



With Juvenal<sup>1</sup> was published Persius,<sup>2</sup> translated wholly by Dryden. This work, though like all the other productions of Dryden it may have shining parts, seems to have been written merely for wages, in an uniform mediocrity, without any eager endeavour after excellence, or laborious effect of the mind.

There wanders an opinion among the readers of poetry, that one of these satires is an exercise of the school. Dryden says that he once translated it at school; but not that he preserved or published the juvenile performance.

Not long afterwards he undertook perhaps the most arduous work of its kind, a translation of Virgil, for which he had shewn how well he was qualified by his version of the Pollio,<sup>3</sup> and two episodes, one of Nisus and Euryalus, the other of Mezentius and Lausus.

In the comparison of Homer and Virgil, the discriminative excellence of Homer is elevation and comprehension of thought, and that of Virgil is grace and splendor of diction. The beauties of Homer are therefore difficult to be lost, and those of Virgil difficult to be retained. The massy trunk of sentiment is safe by its solidity, but the blossoms of elocution easily drop away. The author, having the choice of his own images, selects those which he can best adorn: the translator must, at all hazards, follow his original, and express thoughts which perhaps he would not have chosen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language so much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who read the "Georgick" and the "Eneid" should be much delighted with any version.

<sup>1</sup> S. S. D. vol. xiii. Ald. D. vol. v. pp. 71, 161.

<sup>2</sup> Virgil's Fourth Eclogue. Printed in Tonson's *First Miscellany* 1684.

<sup>3</sup> Printed in Tonson's *Second Miscellany*, 1685.

ll these obstacles Dryden saw, and all these he de-  
 mined to encounter. The expectation of his work was  
 oubtedly great; the nation considered its honour as in-  
 sted in the event. One gave him the different editions  
 is author, and another helped him in the subordinate  
 s. The arguments of the several books were given him  
 Addison.

he hopes of the publick were not disappointed. He  
 luced, says Pope,<sup>1</sup> *the most noble and spirited translation*<sup>2</sup>  
*I know in any language.* It certainly excelled whatever  
 appeared in English, and appears to have satisfied his  
 ads, and, for the most part, to have silenced his enemies.  
 bourne, indeed, a clergyman, attacked it; but his out-  
 s seem to be the ebullitions of a mind agitated by  
 nger resentment than bad poetry can excite, and pre-  
 sly resolved not to be pleased.

his criticism extends only to the Preface, Pastorals, and  
 rgicks; and, as he professes, to give his antagonist an  
 rtunity of reprisal, he has added his own version of the  
 and fourth Pastorals, and the first Georgick. The  
 d has forgotten his book; but since his attempt  
 given him a place in literary history, I will preserve a  
 imen of his criticism, by inserting his remarks<sup>3</sup> on the  
 cation before the first Georgick, and of his poetry, by  
 xing his own version.

er. 1. "*What makes a plenteous harvest, when to turn,  
 fruitful soil, and when to sow the corn—It's unlucky,  
 say, to stumble at the threshold, but what has a plenteous  
 est to do here? Virgil would not pretend to prescribe  
 s for that which depends not on the husbandman's care,  
 the disposition of Heaven altogether. Indeed, the*

In the Preface to the *Iliad*.

For Wordsworth's opinion of it, see Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. ii.  
 80.

*Notes on Dryden's Virgil*, Lond. 1698, by Luke Milbourne, author  
 other works, now forgotten.

*plenteous crop depends somewhat on the good method of tillage, and where the land's ill manur'd, the corn, without a miracle, can be but indifferent; but the harvest may be good, which is its properest epithet, tho' the husbandman's skill were never so indifferent. The next sentence is too literal, and when to plough had been Virgil's meaning, and intelligible to every body; and when to sow the corn is a needless addition."*

Ver. 3. "*The care of sheep, of oxen, and of kine, And when to geld the lambs, and sheer the swine, would as well have fallen under the cura boum, qui cultus habendo sil pecori, as Mr. D's deduction of particulars."*

Ver. 5. "*The birth and genius of the frugal bee, I sing Mæcenas, and I sing to thee.—But where did experientia ever signify birth and genius? or what ground was there for such a figure in this place? How much more manly is Mr. Ogylby's version!*

"What makes rich grounds, in what celestial signs,  
'Tis good to plough, and marry elms with vines.  
What best fits cattle, what with sheep agrees,  
And several arts improving frugal bees,  
I sing, Mæcenas.'

Which four lines, tho' faulty enough, are yet much more to the purpose than Mr. D's six."

Ver. 22. "*From fields and mountains to my song repair. For patrum linquens nemus, saltusque Lycæi—Very well explained!*"

Ver. 23, 24. "*Inventor Pallas, of the fattening oil, Thou founder of the plough, and ploughman's toil! Written as if these had been Pallas's invention. The ploughman's toil's impertinent."*

Ver. 25. "*—The shroud-like cypress—Why shroud-like? Is a cypress pulled up by the roots, which the sculpture in the last Eclogue fills Silvanus's hand with, so very like a shroud? Or did not Mr. D. think of that kind of cypress*

d often for *scarves and hatbands* at funerals formerly. for *widow's vails*, &c. if so, 'twas a *deep good thought*."

Ver. 26. "—*That wear the royal honours, and increase the year*—What's meant by *increasing the year*? Did the *gods* *goddesses* add more *months*, or *days*, or *hours* to it? Or can *arva tueri*—signify to *wear rural honours*? Is this *translate*, or *abuse* an *author*? The next couplet are borrow'd from *Ogylby*, I suppose, because *less to the purpose* in ordinary."

Ver. 33. "*The patron of the world, and Rome's peculiar wd—Idle*, and none of *Virgil's*, no more than the sense of *precedent couplet*; so again, he *interpolates* *Virgil* with it and *the round circle of the year to guide powerful blessings, which thou strew'st around*. A ridiculous *tinism*, and an *impertinent addition*; indeed the whole is but once piece of *absurdity* and *nonsense*, as those who lay it with the *original* must find."

Ver. 42, 43. "*And Neptune shall resign the fasces of the consul*. Was he *consul* or *dictator* there? *And watry virgins thy bed shall strive*. Both *absurd interpolations*."

Ver. 47, 48. "*Where in the void of heaven a place is free*. happy *D—n*, were *that place* for thee! But where *that void*? Or what does our *translator* mean by it? He owes what *Ovid* says *God* did, to prevent such a *void* in *even*; perhaps, this was then forgotten: but *Virgil* talks more sensibly."

Ver. 49. "*The scorpion ready to receive thy laws*. No, he would not then have *gotten out of his way* so fast."

Ver. 56. "*The Proserpine affects her silent seat*—What made her then so *angry* with *Ascalaphus*, for preventing her *urn*? She was now mus'd to *Patience* under the *determinations of Fate*, rather than *fond* of her *residence*."

Ver. 61, 2, 3. "*Pity the poet's, and the ploughman's cares, forget thy greatness in our mean affairs*. And use thyself *times to hear our prayers*. Which is such a wretched



perversion of *Virgil's noble thought* as *Vicars* would have blush'd at; but *Mr. Ogyly* makes us some amends, by his better lines:

“ ‘O wheresoe'er thou art, from thence incline,  
And grant assistance to my bold design!  
Pity with me, poor husbandmen's affairs,  
And now, as if translated, hear our prayers.’

This is *sense*, and to the purpose: the other, poor-mistaken stuff.”

Such were the strictures of *Milbourne*, who found few abettors; and of whom it may be reasonably imagined, that many who favoured his design were ashamed of his insolence.

When admiration had subsided, the translation was more coolly examined, and found like all others, to be sometimes erroneous, and sometimes licentious. Those who could find faults, thought they could avoid them; and *Dr. Brady*<sup>1</sup> attempted in blank verse a translation of the “*Eneid*,” which, when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry. I have never seen it; but that such a version there is, or has been, perhaps some old catalogue informed me.

With not much better success, *Trapp*,<sup>2</sup> when his Tragedy and his *Praelections* had given him reputation, attempted another blank version of the “*Eneid* ;” to which, notwithstanding the slight regard with which it was treated, he had afterwards perseverance enough to add the “*Eclogues*” and “*Georgicks*.” His book may continue its existence as long as it is the clandestine refuge of schoolboys.

Since the English ear has been accustomed to the melli-

<sup>1</sup> *Nicholas Brady, D.D.*, known best from the version of the *Psalms*, in which he was joined by *Nahum Tate, Poet Laureate*. The translation of the *Eneid* was published, 4 vols. 8vo. 1716-1726.

<sup>2</sup> *Joseph Trapp, D.D. (1679-1747)*, the first Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Author of *Praelectiones Poeticae*, &c., *vid. sup.*

fluence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry has become more splendid, new attempts have been made to translate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men better qualified to contend with Dryden. I will not engage myself in an invidious comparison by opposing the passage to another; a work of which there would be no end, and which might be often offensive without use.

It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated, but by their general effects and ultimate result. It is easy to note a weak line, and write one more vigorous in its place; to find a happiness of expression in the original, and transplant it by force into the version: but what is given to the parts, may be abducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critick may commend. Works of imagination excel by their allurements and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain, which the reader throws away. He only is the master, who keeps the mind in pleasing captivity; whose pages are perused with eagerness, and in hope of new pleasure are perused again; and whose conclusion is perceived with an eye of sorrow, such as the traveller casts upon departing day.

By his proportion of this predominance I will consent that Dryden should be tried; of this, which, in opposition to reason, makes Ariosto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticism, continues Shakespeare the sovereign of the drama.

His last work was his "Fables," in which he gave us the first example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refaccimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of Boiardo<sup>1</sup> has been new-dressed by *Domenichi* and *Berni*.

<sup>1</sup> The *Orlando Innamorato* of Matteo Maria Boiardo, Count of Scandiano, was not published till 1495, the year after the death of the poet, who

The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuvenescence has been bestowed by Dryden, require little criticism. The tale of the Cock<sup>1</sup> seems hardly worth revival; and the story of "Palamon and Arcite,"<sup>2</sup> containing an action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be suffered to pass without censure of the hyperbolic commendation which Dryden has given it in the general Preface, and in a poetical Dedication, a piece where his original fondness of remote conceits seems to have revived.

Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace, "Sigismunda"<sup>3</sup> may be defended by the celebrity of the story. "Theodore and Honoria,"<sup>4</sup> though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of striking description. And "Cymon"<sup>5</sup> was formerly a tale of such reputation, that, at the revival of letters, it was translated into Latin by one of the Beroalds.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever subjects employed his pen, he was still improving our measures and embellishing our language.

left it unfinished at the ninth canto of the third book. An indifferently executed continuation was published in 1516 by Agostini; but the real complement of Boiardo's poem is Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. Milton alludes to the *Orlando Inamorato* in *Paradise Regained*, book iii. lines 337-343, Ald. M. vol. ii. p. 342, lines pronounced by Hallam "perhaps the most musical Milton has ever produced." Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* vol. i. p. 224. The *Orlando Inamorato* was remoulded by Domenichi in 1545, but it was a very feeble production. Berni's *rifacimento* (Paris, 1768) has practically superseded the original poem, which has not been re-printed since 1541.

<sup>1</sup> S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 255.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 427.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 463.

<sup>5</sup> *Cymon and Iphigenia*, *ibid.* p. 486. Ald. D. vol. iv. p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> The Beroalds, uncle and nephew, were distinguished scholars of the sixteenth century. Filippo Beroaldo, the elder (1453-1505), was born at Bologna, displayed extraordinary abilities in his youth, and opened a school at the age of nineteen. He lectured for some months in Paris, and on his return to Bologna was made professor of *belles lettres* there. He it is to whom Johnson refers.—A. MILNES.

in this volume are interspersed some short original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and songs, may be comprised in Congreve's remark, that even those, who had written nothing else, would have entitled him to the praise of excellence in his kind.

One composition must however be distinguished. The ode for St. Cecilia's Day,"<sup>1</sup> perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. It is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there be any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden's odes that excellence must be found. Compared with the ode on Killigrew,"<sup>2</sup> it may be pronounced perhaps superior in the whole; but without any single part, equal the first stanza of the other.

It is said to have cost Dryden a fortnight's labour; but it does not want its negligences: some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes; a defect, which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the writer might hinder him from receiving.

His last stanza has less emotion than the former; but not less elegant in the diction. The conclusion is vicious; a musick of "Timotheus,"<sup>3</sup> which *raised a mortal to the skies*, had only a metaphorical power; that of "Cecilia," which *drew an angel down*,<sup>4</sup> had a real effect: the crown therefore could not reasonably be divided.

In a general survey of Dryden's labours, he appears to have a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

*Alexander's Feast.* S. S. D. vol. xi. p. 171.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105.

*Ibid.* p. 190.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 192.



The power that predominated in his intellectual operations, was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather than felt, and produced sentiments not such as Nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted;<sup>1</sup> and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused in the tumults and agitations of life.

What he says of love may contribute to the explanation of his character :

“ Love various minds does variously inspire ;  
It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,  
Like that of incense on the altar laid ;  
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade ;  
A fire which every windy passion blows,  
With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows.”

Dryden's was not one of the *gentle bosoms* : Love, as it subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved, and wishing only for correspondent kindness ; such love as shuts out all other interest ; the Love of the Golden Age, was too soft and subtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with some other desires ; when it was inflamed by rivalry, or obstructed by difficulties : when it invigorated ambition, or exasperated revenge.

He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetick ; and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others.<sup>2</sup> Simplicity gave him no pleasure ; and for the

<sup>1</sup> This description is, by Boswell, applied to Johnson himself. See Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph also is applied to Johnson by Boswell. *Ibid.*

rest part of his life he passed in travel, and was  
 enough to last. He was not a man of letters, and he  
 say there was *nothing* in the world but *nothing*.

We did not know how to be satisfied, and we  
 attain whether it was the power of the mind, or  
 and in examining the *science* of the mind, and  
 an a *science* of the mind, and in examining the  
 led his days with the *science* of the mind. It was  
 to fix attention on the mind, and to collect the  
 collecting the *science* of the mind, and to collect the  
 to impressing new *science* of the mind, and to  
 andier at the end of the mind, and to collect the  
 he ear with some *science* of the mind, and to  
 less that *science* of the mind.

The favourite exercise of his mind was disputation, and, that argument might not be too *science* of the mind, he delighted to talk of liberty and necessary liberty and necessity; these he discussed in the language of the school with so much *science* of the mind, that the terms which he uses are not always understood. It is indeed learning, but learning out of place.

When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side: he was now no longer at a loss; he had always objections and solutions at command; *verbaque provisam rem*<sup>2</sup>—give him matter for his ease, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.

In Comedy, for which he professes himself not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will perhaps not be found so much to arise from any original humour, or exuberance of character nicely distinguished and diligently pursued, as from incidents and circumstances, artifice and surprizes; from jests of action rather than of sentiment. What he had of humorous or passionate, he seems

<sup>1</sup> Preface to Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*, 1696.

<sup>2</sup> Horace, *Ars Poet.* 311.

to have had not from nature, but from other poets; if not always as a plagiarist, at least as an imitator.

Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and excentrick violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle; to approach the precipice of absurdity, and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy. This inclination sometimes produced nonsense, which he knew; as,

"Move swiftly, sun, and fly a lover's pace,  
Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race.

Amariel flies

To guard thee from the demons of the air;  
My flaming sword above them to display,  
All keen, and ground upon the edge of day."

And sometimes it issued in absurdities, of which perhaps he was not conscious:

"Then we upon our orb's last verge shall go,  
And see the ocean leaning on the sky;  
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,  
And on the lunar world securely pry."<sup>1</sup>

These lines have no meaning; but may we not say, in imitation of Cowley on another book,

"Tis so like sense 'twill serve the turn as well?"

This endeavour after the grand and the new, produced many sentiments either great or bulky, and many images either just or splendid:

"I am as free as Nature first made man,  
Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran." }

<sup>1</sup> *Amor Mordax*. *Ald. Ispica*, vol. i. p. 81.

—'Tis but because the Living death ne'er knew,  
They fear to prove it as a thing that's new :  
Let me th' experiment before you try,  
I'll show you first how easy 'tis to die.

—There with a forest of their darts he strove,  
And stood like *Capaneus* defying Jove ;  
With his broad sword the boldest beating down,  
While Fate grew pale lest he should win the town,  
And turn'd the iron leaves of his dark book  
To make new dooms, or mend what it mistook.

—I beg no pity for this smouldering clay ;  
For if you give it burial, there it takes  
Possession of your earth ;  
If burnt, and scatter'd in the air, the winds  
That strew my dust diffuse my royalty.  
And spread me o'er your clime ; for where one atom  
Of mine shall light, know there Sebastian reigns."

these quotations the two first may be allowed to be  
it, the two latter only tumid.

f such selection there is no end. I will add only a  
more passages ; of which the first, though it may per-  
s not be quite clear in prose, is not too obscure for  
ry, as the meaning that it has is noble :<sup>1</sup>

"No, there is a necessity in Fate,  
Thy still the brave bold man is fortunate ;  
He keeps his object ever full in sight,  
And that assurance holds him firm and right ;  
True, 'tis a narrow way that leads to bliss,  
But right before there is no precipice ;  
Near makes men look aside, and so their footing miss." }

f the images which the two following citations afford,  
first is elegant, the second magnificent ; whether either  
just, let the reader judge :

*Conquest of Granada.* S. S. D. vol. iv. p. 97, act iv. sc. 2.



"What precious drops are these,  
Which silently each other's track pursue,  
Bright as young diamonds in their infant dew?"

"—Resign your castle—  
—Enter, brave Sir: for when you speak the word,  
The gates shall open of their own accord;  
The genius of the place its Lord shall meet,  
And bow its towery forehead at your feet."

These bursts of extravagance, Dryden calls the *Dalilabs* of the Theatre; and owns that many noisy lines of *Maximin* and *Almanzor* call out for vengeance upon him; but *I knew*, says he, *that they were bad enough to please, even when I wrote them.*<sup>1</sup> There is surely reason to suspect that he pleased himself as well as his audience; and that these, like the harlots of other men, had his love, though not his approbation.

He had sometimes faults of a less generous and splendid kind. He makes, like almost all other poets, very frequent use of mythology, and sometimes connects religion and fable too closely without distinction.

He descends to display his knowledge with pedantick ostentation; as when, in translating "Virgil," he says, *tack to the larboard*—and *veer starboard*; and talks, in another work, of *virtue spooming before the wind.*<sup>2</sup> His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance:

"They Nature's king through Nature's opticks view'd;  
Revers'd they view'd him lessen'd to their eyes."

He had heard of reversing a telescope, and unluckily reverses the object.

He is sometimes unexpectedly mean. When he describes the Supreme Being as moved by prayer to stop the Fire of London, what is his expression?

<sup>1</sup> Dedication of *The Spanish Friar*, 1681. S. S. D. vol. vi.

<sup>2</sup> *The Hind and the Panther*, Ald. D. vol. ii. p. 168.

"A hollow crystal pyramid he takes,  
In firmamental waters dipp'd above,  
Of this a broad *extinguisher* he makes,  
And *hoods* the flames that to their quarry strove." <sup>1</sup>

Then he describes the Last Day, and the decisive tribunal,  
intermingles this image :

"When rattling bones together fly,  
From the four quarters of the sky." <sup>2</sup>

It was indeed never in his power to resist the temptation  
a jest. In his "Elegy on Cromwell :

"No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embrac'd,  
Than the *light Monsieur* the *grave Don* outweigh'd ;  
His fortune turn'd the scale—" <sup>3</sup>

He had a vanity, unworthy of his abilities, to shew, as  
ay be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he  
ved, by the use of French words, which had then crept  
ito conversation ; such as *fraicheur* <sup>4</sup> for *coolness*, *fougue* <sup>5</sup>  
or *turbulence*, and a few more, none of which the language  
as incorporated or retained. They continue only where  
ey stood first, perpetual warnings to future innovators.

These are his faults of affectation ; his faults of negli-  
gence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenness of his  
mpositions, that ten lines are seldom found together  
ithout something of which the reader is ashamed. Dry-  
en was no rigid judge of his own pages ; he seldom  
rugged after supreme excellence, but snatched in haste  
hat was within his reach ; and when he could content

<sup>1</sup> *Annus Mirabilis*. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 101, line 1122.

<sup>2</sup> *To the pious memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew*. Ald. D. vol. ii.  
286.

<sup>3</sup> *Heroic Stanzas*. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> *On the Coronation*. Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Astræa Redux*. Ibid. p. 21.

others, was himself contented. He did not keep present to his mind, an idea of pure perfection; nor compare his works, such as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he should be opposed. He had more musick than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the highest place, he had no care to rise by contending with himself; but while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the easiest terms.

He was no lover of labour. What he thought sufficient, he did not stop to make better; and allowed himself to leave many parts unfinished, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written, he dismissed from his thoughts; and, I believe, there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication. The hastiness of his productions might be the effect of necessity; but his subsequent neglect could hardly have any other cause than impatience of study.<sup>1</sup>

What can be said of his versification, will be little more than a dilatation of the praise given it by Pope.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| "Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join<br>The varying verse, the full-resounding line,<br>The long majestick march, and energy divine." | } |
|--|---|

Some improvements had been already made in English numbers; but the full force of our language was not yet felt; the verse that was smooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley had sometimes a finished line, he had it by chance.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cunningham here remarks: "Of Dryden's rapidity in composition we have unmistakable proof in the production of *Britannia Rediviva*." The Prince commemorated in the poem was born on the 10th June, 1688, and Lord Middleton's, "Let this be printed," is dated June 19th, 1688. The poem contains 364 lines.

Dryden knew how to chuse the flowing and the sonorous words; to vary the pauses, and adjust the accents; to diversify the cadence, and yet preserve the smoothness of his metre.

Of Triplets and Alexandrines,<sup>1</sup> though he did not introduce the use, he established it. The triplet has long subsisted among us. Dryden seems not to have traced it higher than to Chapman's "Homer;" but it is to be found in Phaer's "Virgil,"<sup>2</sup> written in the reign of Mary, and in Hall's "Satires,"<sup>3</sup> published five years before the death of Elizabeth.

The Alexandrine was, I believe, first used by Spenser, for the sake of closing his stanza with a fuller sound. We had a longer measure of fourteen syllables, into which the "Eneid" was translated by Phaer, and other works of the ancients by other writers; of which Chapman's "Iliad" was, I believe, the last.

The two first lines of Phaer's third "Eneid" will exemplify this measure:

"When Asia's state was overthrown, and Priam's kingdom stout,  
All guiltless, by the power of gods above was rooted out."

As these lines had their break, or *cæsura*, always at the eighth syllable, it was thought, in time, commodious to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Matt. Arnold observes that by the Alexandrine in English poetry is meant merely a twelve-syllable line. By the Alexandrine metre is meant a poem in couplets of such lines rhyming together. It is the celebrated metre of French tragedy, and takes its name from the *Alexandreis*, a popular romance poem in French on Alexander the Great, published in 1184.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Phaer, author (in 1553) of the *Regiment of Life*, &c., translated the first seven books of Virgil's *Aeneis*.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter, and afterwards of Norwich, 1574-1656. The satires were published 1597-1598. "He was better known," says Warton, "as a poet than as a prelate or polemic." But his *Meditations* and sermons were both useful and popular.



divide them; and quatrains of lines, alternately, consisting of eight and six syllables, make the most soft and pleasing of our lyric measures; as,

"Relentless Time, destroying power,  
Which stone and brass obey,  
Who giv'st to every flying hour  
To work some new decay."

In the Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, some poems, as Drayton's "*Polyolbion*,"<sup>1</sup> were wholly written; and sometimes the measures of twelve and fourteen syllables were interchanged with one another. Cowley was the first that inserted the Alexandrine at pleasure among the heroick lines of ten syllables, and from him Dryden professes to have adopted it.

The Triplet and Alexandrine are not universally approved. Swift always censured them, and wrote some lines to ridicule them. In examining their propriety, it is to be considered that the essence of verse is regularity, and its ornament is variety. To write verse, is to dispose syllables and sounds harmonically by some known and settled rule; a rule however lax enough to substitute similitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to relieve the ear without disappointing it. Thus a Latin hexameter is formed from dactyls and spondees differently combined; the English heroick admits of acute or grave syllables variously disposed. The Latin never deviates into seven feet, or exceeds the number of seventeen syllables; but the English Alexandrine breaks the lawful bounds, and surprises the reader with two syllables more than he expected.

The effect of the Triplet is the same: the ear has been

<sup>1</sup> Michael Drayton's *Polyolbion*, or a chorographical Description of Great Britaine, digested into a Poem, in twelve books, with a table. London, 1613, folio.

accustomed to expect a new rhyme in every couplet, but on a sudden surprised with three rhymes together, which the reader could not accommodate his ear to, did not obtain notice of the change from the traces of the margins. Surely there is something wasteful in the poverty of such mechanical direction.

Considering the metrical art simply as a science, and consequently excluding all casualty, we must allow that triplets and Alexandrines, inserted by rhyme, are interruptions of that constancy to which science aspires. And though the variety which they produce may very justly be desired, yet to make our poetry when there ought to be one stated mode of admitting them.

But till some such regulation can be formed I wish them still to be retained in their present state. They are sometimes grateful to the reader, and sometimes convenient to the poet. Fenton was of opinion that Dryden was too liberal and Pope too sparing in their use.

The rhymes of Dryden are commonly just, and he valued himself for his readiness in finding them: but he is sometimes open to objection.

It is the common practice of our poets to end the second line with a weak or grave syllable:

“ Together o’er the Alps methinks we fly,  
Fill’d with ideas of fair *Italy*.”<sup>1</sup>

Dryden sometimes puts the weak rhyme in the first:

“ Laugh all the powers that favour *tyranny*,  
And all the standing army of the sky.”

Sometimes he concludes a period or paragraph with the last line of a couplet, which, though the French seem to do it without irregularity, always displeases in English poetry.

<sup>1</sup> Pope, *Epistle to Jervas*. The Ald. P. vol. ii. p. 159, has “ fill’d ” instead of “ fill’d.”

osal, his verses may be compared with those which he ures.

“ What makes the richest *till*, beneath what signs  
To *plough*, and when to match your *elms* and *vines* ;  
What care with *flocks* and what with *herds* agrees,  
And all the management of frugal *bees*,  
I sing, *Mæcenas* ! Ye immensely clear,  
Vast orbs of light which guide the rolling year ;  
*Bacchus*, and mother *Ceres*, if by you  
We fat’ning *corn* for hungry *mast* pursue,  
If, taught by you, we first the *cluster* prest,  
And *thin cold streams* with *spritely juice* refresht.  
Ye *fauns* the present *numens* of the field,  
*Wood nymphs* and *fauns*, your kind assistance yield,  
Your gifts I sing ! and thou, at whose fear’d stroke  
From rending earth the fiery *courser* broke,  
Great *Neptune*, O assist my artful song !  
And thou to whom the woods and groves belong,  
Whose snowy heifers on her flow’ry plains  
In mighty herds the *Cæan Isle* maintains !  
*Pan*, happy shepherd, if thy cares divine,  
E’er to improve thy *Mænalus* incline ;  
Leave thy *Lycæan wood* and *native grove*,  
And with thy lucky smiles our work approve !  
Be *Pallas* too, sweet oil’s inventor, kind ;  
And he, who first the crooked *plough* design’d !  
*Sylvanus*, god of all the woods appear,  
Whose hands a new-drawn tender *cypress* bear !  
Ye *gods* and *goddesses* who e’er with love,  
Would guard our pastures, and our fields improve !  
You, who new plants from unsown lands supply ;  
And with condensing clouds obscure the sky,  
And drop ’em softly thence in fruitful showers,  
Assist my enterprize, ye gentler powers !

And thou, great *Cæsar* ! though we know not yet  
Among what gods thou’lt fix thy lofty seat,  
Whether thou’lt be the kind *tutelar god*  
Of thy own *Rome* ; or with thy awful nod,

“5. The words which express those thoughts.

“In the last of these, Homer excels Virgil; Virgil all other ancient poets; and Shakspeare all modern poets.

“For the second of these, the order: the meaning is, that a fable ought to have a beginning, middle, and an end, all just and natural: so that that part, *e.g.* which is the middle, could not naturally be the beginning or end, and so of the rest: all depend on one another, like the links of a curious chain. If terror and pity are only to be raised, certainly this author follows Aristotle’s rules, and Sophocles’ and Euripides’s example: but joy may be raised too, and that doubly; either by seeing a wicked man punished, or a good man at last fortunate; or perhaps indignation, to see wickedness prosperous and goodness depressed: both these may be profitable to the end of tragedy, reformation of manners; but the last improperly, only as it begets pity in the audience: though Aristotle, I confess, places tragedies of this kind in the second form.

“He who undertakes to answer this excellent critique of Mr. Rymier, in behalf of our English poets against the Greek, ought to do it in this manner. Either by yielding to him the greatest part of what he contends for, which consists in this, that the *μύθος*,<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* the design and conduct of it, is more conducing in the Greeks to those ends of tragedy, which Aristotle and he propose, namely, to cause terror and pity; yet the granting this does not set the Greeks above the English poets.

“But the answerer ought to prove two things: first, that the fable is not the greatest master-piece of a tragedy, though it be the foundation of it.

“Secondly, That other ends as suitable to the nature of tragedy may be found in the English, which were not in the Greek.

“Aristotle places the fable first; not *quoad dignitatem*

<sup>1</sup> *Sic.*



*sed quoad fundamentum* : for a fable, never so movingly contrived to those ends of his, pity and terror, will operate nothing on our affections, except the characters, manners, thoughts, and words are suitable.

“So that it remains for Mr. Rymer to prove, that in all those, or the greatest part of them, we are inferior to Sophocles and Euripides: and this he has offered at, in some measure; but, I think, a little partially to the ancients.

“For the fable itself; ’tis in the English more adorned with episodes, and larger than in the Greek poets; consequently more diverting. For, if the action be but one, and that plain, without any counter-turn of design or episode, *i.e.* under-plot, how can it be so pleasing as the English, which have both under-plot and a turned design, which keeps the audience in expectation of the catastrophe? whereas in the Greek poets we see through the whole design at first.

“For the characters, they are neither so many nor so various in Sophocles and Euripides, as in Shakspeare and Fletcher; only they are more adopted to those ends of tragedy which Aristotle commends to us, pity and terror.

“The manners flow from the characters, and consequently must partake of their advantages and disadvantages.

“The thoughts and words, which are the fourth and fifth beauties of tragedy, are certainly more noble and more poetical in the English than in the Greek, which must be proved by comparing them, somewhat more equitably than Mr. Rymer has done.

“After all, we need not yield that the English way is less conducing to move pity and terror, because they often shew virtue oppressed and vice punished: where they do not both, or either, they are not to be defended.

“And if we should grant that the Greeks performed this better, perhaps it may admit of dispute, whether pity and

terror are either the prime, or at least the only ends of tragedy.

"Tis not enough that Aristotle has said so ; for Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides ; and if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind. And chiefly we have to say (what I hinted on pity and terror, in the last paragraph save one), that the punishment of vice and reward are the most adequate ends of tragedy, because most conducing to good example of life. Now pity is not so easily raised for a criminal, and the ancient tragedy always represents its chief person such, as it is for an innocent man ; and the suffering of innocence and punishment of the offender is of the nature of English tragedy : contrarily, in the Greek, innocence is unhappy often, and the offender escapes. Then we are not touched with the sufferings of any sort of men so much as of lovers ; and this was almost unknown to the ancients : so that they neither administered poetical justice, of which Mr. Rymer boasts, so well as we ; neither knew they the best common-place of pity, which is love.

"He therefore unjustly blames us for not building on what the ancients left us : for it seems, upon consideration of the premises, that we have wholly finished what they began.

"My judgement on this piece is this, that it is extremely learned ; but that the author of it is better read in the Greek than in the English poets : that all writers ought to study this critique, as the best account I have ever seen of the ancients : that the model of tragedy he has here given, is excellent, and extreme<sup>1</sup> correct ; but that it is not the only model of all tragedy, because it is too much circumscribed in plot, characters, &c. ; and lastly, that we may be taught here justly to admire and imitate the ancients, without giving them the preference with this author, in prejudice to our own country.

<sup>1</sup> Evidently a misprint for "extremely."

"Want of meaning in this excellent tragedy, makes the thoughts of the audience sometimes obscure."

"His meaning, then, just and better are to be moved as at they are to be moved as the means conducing to the ends of tragedy, which are pleasure and instruction."

"And these two ends may be thus distinguished. The chief end of the poet is to please: for his immediate reputation depends on it."

"The great end of the poem is to instruct, which is performed by making pleasure the vehicle of that instruction; for poetry is an art, and all arts are made to profit men."

"The pity, which the poet is to labour for, is for the criminal, not for those of him whom he has murdered, who have been the occasion of the tragedy. The horror is likewise in the punishment of the same criminal; so, if he be represented too great an offender, will not be pitied: if altogether innocent, his punishment will be just."

"Another obscurity is, where he says Sophocles perfected tragedy by introducing the third actor: that is, he meant, three kinds of action; one company singing, or another dancing on the musick; a third dancing."

"To make a true judgement in this competition betwixt the Greek poets and the English, in tragedy:

"Consider, first, how Aristotle has defined a tragedy. Secondly, what he assigns the end of it to be. Thirdly, what he thinks the beauties of it. Fourthly, the means to obtain the end proposed."

"Compare the Greek and English tragick poets justly, and without partiality, according to those rules."

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Matt. Arnold here remarks that "Rymer meant, not what Ryden says, but what is true—that Sophocles improved the tragic drama by bringing a third interlocutor to the two, who before alone appeared the scene at once."

"Then secondly, consider whether Aristotle has made a just definition of tragedy; of its parts, of its ends, and of its beauties; and whether he, having not seen any others but those of Sophocles, Euripides, &c., had or truly could determine what all the excellences of tragedy are, and wherein they consist.

"Next shew in what ancient tragedy was deficient: for example, in the narrowness of its plots, and fewness of persons, and try whether that be not a fault in the Greek poets; and whether their excellency was so great, when the variety was visibly so little; or whether what they did was not very easy to do.

"Then make a judgement on what the English have added to their beauties: as, for example, not only more plot, but also new passions; as, namely, that of love, scarce touched on by the ancients, except in this one example of Phædra, cited by Mr. Rymer; and in that how short they were of Fletcher!

"Prove also that love, being an heroick passion, is fit for tragedy, which cannot be denied, because of the example alledged of Phædra; and how far Shakspeare has outdone them in friendship, &c.

"To return to the beginning of this enquiry; consider if pity and terror be enough for tragedy to move: and I believe, upon a true definition of tragedy, it will be found that its work extends farther, and that it is to reform manners, by a delightful representation of human life in great persons, by way of dialogue. If this be true, then not only pity and terror are to be moved, as the only means to bring us to virtue, but generally love to virtue and hatred to vice; by shewing the rewards of one, and punishments of the other; at least, by rendering virtue always amiable, tho' it be shewn unfortunate; and vice detestable, though it be shewn triumphant.

"If, then, the encouragement of virtue and discouragement



and if this is the worst all that can be said, that the  
and terror of the scene is raised in the mind of the  
be passionate in their views, and in their conduct, and  
W. Rymer will find that in the case of the two  
loves: and I cannot be contented with the fact, that  
to be raised in the mind of the audience, and that  
harshness that will be raised in the mind of the  
audience in their conduct.

"And if after all this, the scene is not raised in  
his consciousness of the fact, and the mind of the audience  
on the fact, then it is a failure, and the fact is  
not answered, and the mind of the audience is not  
raised in the mind of the audience."

"And here Mr. Rymer will find that the scene is  
to be important, and that the mind of the audience  
is of weight in the mind of the audience, and the  
unhappy."

"This evident scene is not raised in the mind of the  
audience, and the scene is not raised in the mind of the  
audience."

"To give the play of the scene in the mind of the  
audience is the best of the scene."

"One reason is, because whatever actors they have  
found, the event has been the same: that is, the same  
passions have been always moved: which shews, that there  
is something of force and merit in the plays themselves,  
inducing to the design of raising these two passions: and  
suppose them ever to have been excellently acted, yet  
action only adds grace, vigour, and more life, upon the  
stage; but cannot give it wholly where it is not first:  
but secondly, I dare appeal to those who have never  
seen them acted, if they have not found these two  
passions moved within them: and if the general voice will  
carry it, Mr. Rymer's prejudice will take off his simple  
testimony.

"This, being matter of fact, is reasonably to be established by this appeal; as if one man says 'tis night, the rest of the world conclude it to be day; there needs no farther argument against him, that it is so.

"If he urge, that the general taste is depraved, his arguments to prove this can at best but evince that our poets took not the best way to raise those passions; but experience proves against him, that these means, which they have used, have been successful, and have produced them.

"And one reason of that success is, in my opinion, this, that Shakspeare and Fletcher have written to the genius of the age and nation in which they lived; for though nature, as he objects, is the same in all places, and reason too the same; yet the climate, the age, the disposition of the people, to whom a poet writes, may be so different, that what pleased the Greeks would not satisfy an English audience.

"And if they proceeded upon a foundation of truer reason to please the Athenians than Shakspeare and Fletcher to please the English, it only shews that the Athenians were a more judicious people; but the poet's business is certainly to please the audience.

"Whether our English audience have been pleased hitherto with acorns, as he calls it, or with bread, is the next question; that is, whether the means which Shakspeare and Fletcher have used in their plays to raise those passions before named, be better applied to the ends by the Greek poets than by them. And perhaps we shall not grant him this wholly: let it be granted that a writer is not to run down with the stream, or to please the people by their own usual methods, but rather to reform their judgements, it still remains to prove that our theatre needs this total reformation.

"The faults, which he has found in their designs, are

er wittily aggravated in many places than reasonably ed; and as much may be returned on the Greeks, by who were as witty as himself.

2. They destroy not, if they are granted, the foundation of the fabrick; only take away from the beauty the symmetry: for example, the faults in the character of the King and No-king are not as he makes m, such as render him detestable, but only imperfections which accompany human nature, and are for the most part excused by the violence of his love; so that y destroy not our pity or concernment for him: this wer may be applied to most of his objections of that d.

And Rollo committing many murders, when he is arrable but for one, is too severely arraigned by him: it adds to our horror and detestation of the criminal: poetick justice is not neglected neither; for we stab in our minds for every offence which he commits; the point, which the poet is to gain on the audience, ot so much in the death of an offender as the raising horror of his crimes.

That the criminal should neither be wholly guilty, nor olly innocent, but so participating of both as to move a pity and terror, is certainly a good rule, but not perially to be observed; for that were to make all traies too much alike, which objection he foresaw, but has fully answered.

To conclude, therefore; if the plays of the ancients more correctly plotted, ours are more beautifully writ-

And if we can raise passions as high on worse foundations, it shews our genius in tragedy is greater; for, in other parts of it, the English have manifestly excelled n."

The original of the following letter is preserved in the Library at Lambeth, and was kindly imparted to the publick by the reverend Dr. Vyse.

Copy of an original Letter from John Dryden, Esq; to his sons in Italy, from a MS in the Lambeth Library, marked N° 933. p. 56.

*(Superscribed)*

Al Illustrissimo Sig<sup>r</sup>  
Carlo Dryden Camariere  
d'Honore A. S. S.

In Roma.

Franca per Mantoua.

“ Sept. the 3d, our style

“ Dear Sons,

“ Being now at Sir William Bowyer's in the country, I cannot write at large, because I find myself somewhat indisposed with a cold, and am thick of hearing, rather worse than I was in town. I am glad to find, by your letter of July 26th, your style, that you are both in health; but wonder you should think me so negligent as to forget to give you an account of the ship in which your parcel is to come. I have written to you two or three letters concerning it, which I have sent by safe hands, as I told you, and doubt not but you have them before this can arrive to you. Being out of town, I have forgotten the ship's name, which your mother will enquire, and put it into her letter, which is joined with mine. But the master's name I remember: he is called Mr. Ralph Thorp; the ship is bound to Leghorn, consigned to Mr. Peter and Mr. Tho. Ball, merchants. I am of your opinion, that by Tonson's means almost all our letters have miscarried for this last year. But, however, he has missed of his design in the



dedication, though he had prepared the book for it: for every figure of 'Æneas' he has caused him to be drawn like King William, with a hooked nose. After my return to town, I intend to alter a play of Sir Robert Howard's, written long since, and lately put by him into my hands: it is called 'The Conquest of China by the Tartars.' It will cost me six weeks study, with the probable benefit of a hundred pounds. In the mean time I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the patroness of musick. This is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny the Stewards of the Feast, who came in a body to me to desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgman, whose parents are your mother's friends. I hope to send you thirty guineas between Michaelmas and Christmas, of which I will give you an account when I come to town. I remember the counsel you gave me in your letter; but dissembling, though lawful in some cases, is not my talent; yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the plain openness of my nature, and keep my just resentments against that degenerate order. In the mean time, I flatter not myself with any manner of hopes, but do my duty, and suffer for God's sake; being assured, beforehand, never to be rewarded, though the times should alter. Towards the latter end of this month, September, Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his nativity, which, casting it myself, I am sure is true, and all things hitherto have happened accordingly to the very time that I predicted them: I hope at the same time to recover more health, according to my age. Remember me to poor Harry, whose prayers I earnestly desire. My "Virgil" succeeds in the world beyond a desert or my expectation. You know the profits might have been more; but neither my conscience nor my honour could suffer me to take them: but I never can repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded of the jus-



*racter of Polybius*, prefixed to a translation by Sir Henry Sheere.

1694. Poem prefixed to Congreve's *Double Dealer*. The fourth volume of *Miscellany Poems*, called also the *Annual Miscellany*, containing a translation of the *Georgics*, book III. (The third and fourth vols. of this *Miscellany* were principally by other writers, the first and second were almost entirely Dryden's.)
1695. A prose translation of Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*.
1697. Poetical translation of Virgil. The poem, *Alexander's Feast*.
1700. *Fables*, translated into verse from Homer, Ovid, Boccaccio and Chaucer, with original *Poems*.

## APPENDIX.



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## APPENDIX A.

### COWLEY'S WILL.

FIRST PRINTED BY PETER CUNNINGHAM IN THE  
"SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY'S PAPERS."

#### TESTAMENT.

IN the name of God Almighty, to whom bee for ever all glory,  
- Amen. I, ABRAHAM COWLEY, of Chertsea, in the county of  
Surrey, being at present by God's mercy in perfect health and  
understanding, and well considering the uncertainty of human  
life, most especially in these tymes of sicknes and mortality, doe,  
in attendance of God's blessed pleasure concerning my life or  
death, make and declare this my last Will and Testament as  
followeth. I humbly recommend my soule to that greate God  
from whom I had it, beseeching him to receive it into his bosome  
for the merits of his sonne, the saviour of sinners, amongst  
whome I am one of the greatest, and my body to the earth, from  
whence it came, in hopes of a happy resurrection. O Lord, I  
believe, help my unbelief; O Lord, I repent, pardon the weak-  
nesses of my repentance.

All my worldly goods, moneys, and chattels, I bequeath to my  
other Thomas Cowley, whome I doe hereby constitute my sole  
heir and executor, hee paying out of y<sup>e</sup> estate, w<sup>ch</sup> it has pleased  
God to bestowe upon me, much above my deserts, these ensue-  
ing Legacies.

I leave to my neveu — Cowley (if hee bee yet alive) ten  
pounds; To my cosen Benjamin Hind, towards his education in  
learning, fifty pounds; To my cosen — Ganton, of Nutfield,  
Surrey, for y<sup>e</sup> same use of his eldest sonne, fifty pounds;  
to my cosen Mary Ganton, twenty pounds; To Thomas

Fotherby, of Canterbury, Esquire, one hundred pounds, w<sup>ch</sup> [I] beseech him to accept of as a small remembrance of his ancient kindness to mee; To Sir Will Davenant, twenty pounds; To Mr. Mart Clifford, twenty pounds; To Mr. Thomas Sprat, twenty pounds; To Mr. Thomas Cook, twenty pounds; To Dr. Charles Scarburgh, twenty pounds; To Dr. Thomas Croyden, twenty pounds; To my mayd, Mary (besides what I ow her, and all my wearing linen), twenty pounds; To my servant, Thomas Waldron, ten pounds and most of my wearing clothes at my brother's choise; To Mary, my brother's mayd, five pounds; To the poore of the town of Chertsea, twenty pounds.

I doe farther leave to the Honourable John Hervey, of Ickworth, Esquire, my share and interest in his Highnes the Duke of York's Theater. And to y<sup>e</sup> Right Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Earl of S<sup>t</sup> Albans, my Lord, and once kind Master, a Ring of ten pounds, onely in memory of my duty and affection to him, not being able to give anything worthy his acceptance, nor hee (God bee praised) in need of any gifts from such persons as I.

If anything bee due to mee from Trinity College [Cambridge], I leave it to bee bestowed in books upon y<sup>t</sup> library; and I leave besides to Doctor Robert Crane, Fellowe of y<sup>e</sup> said College, a Ring of five pounds valew, as a small token of o<sup>r</sup> friendship.

I desire my dear friend, M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Sprat, to trouble himselfe w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> collection and revision of all such writings of mine (whether printed before or not) as hee shall thinke fit to be published, Beseeching him not to let any passe which hee shall judge unworthy of the name of his friend, and most especially nothing (if anything of y<sup>t</sup> kind have escaped my pen) w<sup>ch</sup> may give the least offence in point of religion or good manners. And in consideration of this unpleasant task, I desire him to accept of my Study of Books.

This I declare to bee my last Will and Testament. Lord have mercy upon my soul. Written by my own hand, signed and sealed, at Chertsea, this 28th day of September, 1665.

ABRAHAM COWLEY.

Signed and sealed in  
the presence of

*Thomas Waldron.*

The mark of † *John Symonds,*  
Wheelwright, of Chertsey.

## APPENDIX B.

TATUTE AND DECREE OF THE DIET OF  
THE KINGDOM OF WARSAW.

DEC. 5, 1650.

(Translation.)

ACKNOWLEDGING the good will of the Grandfather of the King of England, who, during the embarrassing period of the Turkish War (*tempore necessitatis belli Turcici*), gave evidence thereof to the Republic, and wishing on our part in some way to render aid in this his similar misfortune (*opem ferre in hac ipsius calamitate*), we order all English and Scotch merchants residing in the Kingdom, and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as in all provinces of the Republic, individually and under oath, after having valued his property, to pay 10 florins for every 100 florins in his possession, and to deposit them with the magistrates of our Royal boroughs, and in those (towns) subject to (belonging to) the nobility and clergy, that they deposit them with their landlords, at the end of 8 weeks at the latest, under penalty due to embezzlement (*sub pœna peculatis*). And the landlords (*seigneurs*), as well as the municipal magistrates, are ordered to forward this money to the officers of our treasury of the Kingdom and Grand Duchy of Lithuania before the 13th of March: and our treasurers are to place this money, in return for a receipt, in the hands of the ambassador of the King of England. And the said English and Scotch merchants, after having paid this tax, shall be exempt from all other taxes of the Republic decreed by the same Diet, the Custom Duties of the Republic excepted."—*Volumina Legum Cracow*.

"1651, 21st Jan., Warsaw, Jean Casimir, King of Poland, in carrying out the resolution of the preceding Diet by way of help (*ratione subsidii*) to the King of England, being in need (se



*trouvant en nécessité*), commands Henri Drioss, Notary of the Royal Treasury, to exact for this purpose, the tenth part of the possessions of the English and Scotch residents in Poland."

"In carrying out this royal decree the said notary of the royal treasury laid informations before the Chief Magistrate of Cracow against Alexander Dixon, merchant of Cracow, Anna, widow of William Huyson, merchant of Cracow, James Chaubert, James Larminé, James Cramer, citizen of Brady, Richard Gordon, merchant of Leopold, and Abraham Osyerth, citizen and merchant of Wegrow, who refuse to pay this tax."—*Acte, inscript.* tom. 39.

## APPENDIX C.

THE SCOTS IN POLAND DURING THE  
FIFTEENTH, SIXTEENTH, AND  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES.

“ I HAVE formerly read without much reflection of the multitude of Scotchmen that travelled with their wares in Poland; and that their numbers were not small the success of this negotiation gives sufficient evidence.” Vol. i. p. 80.

The statement, that there were in the sixteenth century 30,000 Scotch families in Poland, astounding as it seems, does not rest solely on the report of the Scotch traveller William Lithgow. We find it asserted in a letter dated March 24, 1621, (Chamberlain to Carleton *Cal. State Papers, Dom. Ser.* 38): “ The Polish Ambassador has had an audience and requests men to resist the Turk. The King promises well: it is thought he will have leave to raise Scotch and Irish troops, there being 30,000 Scotch families in Poland.” This must, therefore, have been the generally accepted belief on the subject; but even if we reduce the number to 20,000, the fact that £10,000 only was extracted by the “decimation” shows that the mass of the people must have been extremely poor, especially as we know that a few among them had amassed considerable wealth.

There seems little doubt that the generality of these settlers commenced their career as pedlars,<sup>1</sup> and probably most of them

<sup>1</sup> It can hardly be necessary to refer to the Poem in which Wordsworth has idealized the “Vagrant Merchant” (“Excursion” bk. I. line 319 *et seq.*) but some may like to be reminded of the note (*Works*, vol. vi. p. 345, ed. 1837) to line 344 “much did he see of men” in which the poet quotes an interesting passage on “those who carry the pack” from Heron’s *Journey in Scotland* (Perth, 1793), vol. i. p. 89.

continued in that line, so that the "Scotch Pedlar in Poland" became almost a proverbial expression. Thus Howel, writing in 1633, makes the following amusing comparison: "There was as much difference between them (speaking of two letters from his nephew) as 'twixt a Scotch pedlar's pack in Poland and the magazine of an English merchant in Naples, the one being usually full of Taffety Silks and Sattins, the other of Callicoës, thred, ribbons and such polldavy ware" (*Epist. Ho Elianae*, p. 316, 7th ed. 1705).

In confirmation of this we find in the Decrees of the Diets of Poland of the years 1589, 1591, 1595, and 1598, the following decree repeated: "The Scotch who carry their goods on foot in boxes and who have no carts, shall pay 1 florin per head, and those who possess carts and horses are to pay 2 florins for each horse and the duties on their goods are to be the same as those on other merchants." The Diet of 1613 doubled this tax.<sup>1</sup> Among other things they carried a particular kind of drapery called "Scotch," which seems to have been of wool, and very probably the linen damask cloths bearing representations of the victories over the Turks<sup>2</sup> would in later times be included in their "pudhill," "crame," or pack.

Great numbers settled in Cracow, and though highly approved by the Court, the nobles, and buyers in general, they were far from welcome to the tradesmen of the country, and towards the end of the sixteenth century a complaint against them was laid before the Stadtrath of Cracow, as being "troublesome disturbers of the trade of this place." "We, old and young, Masters of the Company of Cutlers bemoan ourselves to your Worships and state our grievances. These Scotchmen ruin us with their trade tricks; for one who has the wares sells them in two stalls at the same time, and, not satisfied with that, makes his boys sit by the houses selling knives, or sends them round from house to house with vans. These same Scotchmen frequently conceal inferior workmen in their houses whom they supply with materials for their trade, and they get the knives thus made and sell them, whereby our Company is ruined, our means of living destroyed, and our workpeople corrupted."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grabow, *Alt. Nach. über Krakau*.

<sup>2</sup> See *Northern Notes and Queries*, vol. i. p. 29, vol. iv. p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> Grabow, *Alt. Nach. über Krakau* (1).

the Scots had made themselves independent of the  
and a decree was pronounced as follows:—

“*By the Grace of God, King of Poland, etc., etc., to the  
Bishops and famous officers and Senators of our State of Cracovia,  
, etc., etc. Beloved Subjects. The Scots who continually  
at Court, and to whom there has been conceded by us  
places where we shall be with our Council, a free  
of exposing and selling their wares, command that they  
instructed by you our trusty subjects from using in Cracovia  
any conceded to them by us. We command you our  
subjects to offer no assistance to them in that matter, to  
precisely who hold the privileges conceded by us  
a definite area for that business. . . . For if by reason  
trade being stopped they should have inserted our Court,  
if you perchance would follow as men Lithuania and other  
to which we may go, while still our Court cannot do with-  
e men who supply it with necessary wares. Therefore,  
other places they go, and in former wars have done so  
an abundance of necessary wares for sale to every one in  
it, it is just that it should be lawful for them to do so  
also where our Court now is. That is to be by all means  
that there is no prohibition on them, and that a defined  
marked out as aforesaid, we enjoin upon you our trusty  
, and for our sake let not our trusty subjects act other-  
Given at Nipomice this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March in the year of  
d 1585, the 9<sup>th</sup> year of our reign. STEPHEN King. S. p. t.  
leczki.” This document is written on parchment with  
l of the Royal Chamber below the attestation. Act.  
XVIII. lib. I. i. (*Leg. Privil. Stat. Civil. Cracov.* 1507.  
. 367. Edit. Colleg. Univ. Cracov).*

satirical touch—no one of you perchance would follow  
ows a light on the character of the Poles as amusing as  
of Scottish peculiarities in Lithgow's "Travels," where  
(p. 421, ed. 1632): "Between Cracovia and Warsaw  
found abundance of gallant rich merchants, my country  
to were all very kind to me, and so were in every place  
came the conclusion being *ever sealed with deepe draughts  
d be with you.*"

mpse of the causes that had made Poland so attractive a  
ground to the canny Scot is given in the following

ground to the canny Scot is given in the following



curious passage: "A certain person thus described Poland: The famous kingdom of the Poles is the Heaven of the nobility, the Paradise of Jews,<sup>1</sup> the Purgatory of the commonalty, the infernal regions of the peasantry, the gold mine of strangers, the cause of the luxury of women: rich indeed with much wool, yet always needing garments; it produces plenty of flax yet seeks a foreign web: foreign wares it loves, those manufactured at home it neglects; in things dearly bought it boasts, things cheaply bought it despises." R. P. M. Radau, *Artis Oratoris*, p. 9. Lond. 1657.

That the country was very well adapted by road and water for travelling merchants is shown in an oration delivered at Rome in 1567 to Pope Pius by M. Antony Muretus, in behalf and in the name of Sigismund, King of Poland. After describing the boundaries of Poland he says: "Nearly the whole region is level and flat, watered by many and great rivers, most sufficient for fertility and commerce, rich even to abundance with things necessary for life."<sup>2</sup> He eulogizes the country and the people in highly rhetorical fashion, and represents it as a sort of divinely appointed fortress and citadel of the Christian faith, where brave men can "meet and repel the savagery of the barbarians and for keeping perpetual watch on behalf of all Christians." Of course, "dissidents" would be excluded from this wide-sounding term, but that the "faithful" would have a hearty welcome at the hands of the king would be an additional attraction to men who in the middle of the sixteenth century had no rest for the religious sole of their foot in Scotland.

In the Records (*Acten Büchern*) of the Council (Warsaw, 1573-1626), are many Scotch names. From a list of forty-one a few only may here be quoted. Of citizens we find two Burnets, a Cramer, Tom Robertson, a Fraser, a Hodgson, a Carmichael, and a Wood. Three Dixons were merchants and tailors in 1607. W. Forbes kept an ironmonger's shop. George Embsle kept a shop with hardware, which was also sold from trays in the streets. In 1612 John Rynt, a Scot, farmed the sulphur mines near

<sup>1</sup> It does not seem, however, that any privileges were accorded to the Jews such as the Scots enjoyed, and they would probably have been very unwilling to assent to this description. See the complaint of Manasseh Ben Israel, in 1656, in *Vindicie Judaeorum*, sect. i. p. 18. London, 1656.

<sup>2</sup> P. 147. *Orat.* 14, edit. *Coloniae*, 1601.

Cracow, and in 1652 the family still lived there, for we find that the messenger of the Council notes in that year, "I went to the sulphur mines where the Rynts live with the copy of the King's decree," doubtless to enforce the tax (for England) which should have been paid in March, 1651.

Among Scotch names at Cracow we find also Alex Duff, David Dundas, James Dumfries, Alex Duncan, Smart, Scott (noted as dwelling in the castle with the King), and among the citizens of one year's creation are a Fraser, a Hodgson, a Carmichael, and a Wood. Many were known merely by their Christian names, but these were probably beginners in trade, it seems to have been the custom very frequently, when the trader's credit was established, or perhaps when requiring recommendations for some coveted office, to obtain from home, as Scotland would still be called, certificates of their birth and family. Such are the "Birth Brieves," from the Register of the Burgh of Aberdeen, 1637-1705, published in the "Spalding Miscellanies," vol. v.

The successful among these early emigrants either returned to Scotland with their hard-earned wealth, bought land<sup>1</sup> and founded a branch of the family of which they were so proud, or they settled in Poland, buying land and establishing their family in the country of their adoption. The first class were by far the most numerous, and there is little doubt that careful search would discover that as Lithgow said, speaking as a Scotchman (p. 422), "Poland was the mother of our commons, the first commencement of all our best merchants' wealth, or at least the most part of them." We can only here mention (by the courtesy of Dr. Skene, H. M. Historiographer for Scotland) the Skene family, several members of which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are known to have emigrated to Poland. One was a postmaster, two were burghesses of Posen, another was a merchant in Lymoski, and married a daughter of Robert Chalmers, merchant of Dantzic, while another was "apprenticed to Mr. George Adie," merchant in Dantzic, where he learnt his trade, by which he acquired a handsome fortune there, returned with it to Scotland, and purchased the lands of Wester Finstray and Robeslaw.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> How readily the Scotch pedlars would do this is well illustrated by a passage in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, ch. xxxvii., by Scott, who, in the *Tales of a Grandfather*, ch. xl., has also an interesting passage on the pedlars, but his remarks apply only to a later period.

<sup>2</sup> It will be remembered that it was a James Skene, of Robeslaw,

Of the Scots who established themselves for good in Poland one striking example may be mentioned. Both among the Scotch names in the "Records" at Cracow, and in the "Birth Brieves" at Aberdeen, the name of Gordon frequently appears. In 1645, a Richard Gordon, trader (probably banker) at the Royal Court, was licensed as royal servant and factor "in respect of his services in various warlike expeditions, so as to be subject only to the jurisdiction of the Marshall,"<sup>1</sup> and it was probably he whose name appears among those Scots who refused to pay the tax of 1651 for the benefit of the English king. A similar refusal caused the removal of many Scotch families from Cracow,<sup>2</sup> but Gordon seems to have been too valuable a servant to be lost, for whether he paid or not, we find his privileges officially confirmed in 1679. His success no doubt encouraged others of the same name to try their fortune, and finally we find the following certificate: "Oct. 9, 1717: The Provost and Councils of the ancient state of Aberdeen in Scotland signify that Nathaniel Gordon who, being then in his 14<sup>th</sup> year left Aberdeen in the month of May 1701 for foreign parts and who lives in Cracow, is the legitimate son of William Gordon, and Christina Wylie grandson indeed of James Gordon of Seatown, Keeper of the Privy Seal of the Kingdom of Scotland and Elizabeth Forbes, great grandson of James Gordon and Janet Kirk." (*Lib. Relat. Cast. Crac.*)

This certificate, which is preserved at the University Jagello-nienne at Cracow, is written on parchment with a border of arms painted, among which are the arms of the Gordon family, the escutcheon blue divided transversely into three fields, the upper one has two boar's heads, argent, with the moon between them, the middle one, an exchequer of three rows of white and black squares, the lowest field has a boar's head, argent.

Dr. Isidor Kopernicki, who has so kindly furnished these extracts from the "Records" in his keeping, adds that this same Nathaniel Gordon, merchant at Cracow, is the founder of the noble Polish family of Gordons, who at the present time live in Poland, and

who is gratefully mentioned by Scott as assisting him in the preparation of *Anne of Geierstein*.

<sup>1</sup> *Lib. Relat. Castri Cracoviensis*.

<sup>2</sup> For instance we find the following entry:—"John Duget, Goldsmith, of Cracow, with his wife Anna, *née* Hunter, and their children, left Cracow for Thorn in consequence of the affair before mentioned," *i. e.* the enforcing of the tax.

ave taken in addition the title of Marquis of Huntly, re-  
on a charming estate named Vjcow, some little distance  
of Cracow, near the Russian frontier.

tly, mention must be made of Andrew Leek (*Andreas*  
*us*), an author of some reputation, to judge from the  
r of his works found in the Polish bibliography, fifteen of  
appeared between 1603 and 1609. These were chiefly Latin  
, one of which was entitled *Jovis arbitrium sive Jus*. Londini  
t, 1603, but he also wrote in the Polish language, and in one  
poems, *The Muse of the Mountain*, describes the country  
; mineral springs.

influence of James VI. in Poland is forcibly illustrated by the  
ling, at his instigation, of John Stercovius, a Pole, who  
; been mobbed and hooted in the streets when he visited  
nd, published on his return to Poland, *A Legend of Re-*  
*es against the Scotch nation*, which cost him his life.  
*Ann. Scot.* i. 448.



## APPENDIX D.

## THE NUNCUPATIVE WILL OF JOHN MILTON.

DISCOVERED BY THOMAS WARTON. FIRST PRINTED IN 1791.

*(From the original in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.)*

MEMORANDUM, that JOHN MILTON, late of the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, in the countie of Middlesex, gentleman, deceased, at severall times before his death, and in particular on or about the twentieth day of July, in the year of our Lord God 1674, being of perfect mind and memorie, declared his Will and intent as to the disposall of his estate after his death, in these words following, or like effect :—

“The portion due to me from Mr. Powell, my former wife’s father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her, having received no parte of it : but my meaning is, they shall have no other benefit of my estate than the said portion, and what I have besides done for them ; they having been very undutiful to me. All the residue of my estate I leave to [the] disposall of Elizabeth, my loving wife.” Which words, or to the same effect, were spoken in the presence of Christopher Milton.

× (Mark of) ELIZABETH FISHER.

Nov. 23, 1674.

This will was contested by Anne, Mary, and Deborah Milton, the only children of the poet, being his daughters by his first wife, Mary Powell. The cause was tried before Sir Leoline Jenkins, Judge of the Prerogative Court and Secretary of State, and the depositions were taken in part before Dr. (afterwards Sir William) Trumbull, the friend of Pope. The witnesses on

**t**he part of the widow were Christopher Milton, the poet's only brother, and Mary and Elizabeth Fisher, his servant maids.

The brother deposed that "he is a practicer in the law and a bencher in the Inner Temple, but living in vacations at Ipswich; that he did usually at the end of the Term visit John Milton, his brother, before going home, and so at the end of Midsummer Term last past he went to visit his said brother, and then found him within his chamber, in his own house, situate on Bunhill, within the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, and that he did then, not being well, and in a serious manner, declare his will in the aforesaid very words, as near as the deponent can now call to mind, being at the time of perfect mind and memory." To the *second* interrogation of the judge, he replied, "that he does not remember the exact day of the month or week, but well remembereth it was in a forenoon, and on the very day on which he, the deponent, was going into the country in the Ipswich coach, which goeth not out of town until noon or thereabouts." To the *third*, that the said deceased was then ill of the gout, and what he then spake touching his will was in a very calm manner, only he complained, but without passion, that his children had been unkind to him, but that his wife had been very kind and careful of him. To the *fourth*, that he knoweth not how the parties ministering these interrogatories frequent the church, or what manner of life or conversation they are of, they living apart from their father four or five years last past; and as touching deceased displeasure with them, he only heard him say at the time of declaring his will that they were undutiful and unkind to him, not expressing any particulars, but in former times he hath heard him complain that they were careless of him being blind, and made nothing of deserting him. To the *sixth*, that what is left to the parties ministering these interrogatories by the deceased's will is in the hands of persons of ability, able to pay the same, being their grandmother and uncle, and he hath seen the grandfather's will, wherein 'tis particularly directed to be paid unto them by his executors. To the *seventh*, that the respondent did draw up the very will executed in this cause, and write it with his own hand when he came to this Court about the 23rd November last, and at that time did read it over to Elizabeth Fisher; that respondent also waited once on deceased's widow at Dr. Exton's chambers about this suit, at which time she wanted

some half-crowns, and that he lent her then two half-crowns; and to the *eighth* interrogation he replies that Anne Milton is lame and helpless.

Mary Fisher deposed that she knew and was well acquainted with John Milton for about a twelvemonth before his death, who died about a month since, to the best of deponent's remembrance; that about two months since, as near as she can remember, this deponent being then in the kitchen of the house of the foresaid John Milton, situate against the Artillery Yard, near Bunhill Fields, and about noon of the same day, the deceased and Elizabeth his wife being then at dinner in the kitchen, he, the deceased, amongst other discourse to his wife did utter these words, viz. "Make much of me as long as I live, for thou knowest I have given thee all when I die at thy disposal;" there being then present in the kitchen deponent's sister and *contest* [fellow-witness] Elizabeth Fisher, and the said deceased was at that time of perfect mind and memory, and talked and discoursed sensibly and well, and was very merry, and seemed to be in good health of body.

Elizabeth Fisher, by whom the will is signed, deposed that she was servant unto Mr. John Milton for about a year before his death, who died upon a Sunday the 15th of November last, at night. That she remembers in the month of July last the said deceased being in his lodging-chamber at dinner with his wife, and the said Elizabeth Milton having provided something for the deceased's dinner which he very well liked, he spoke to his said wife these or the like words, viz. "God have mercy, Betty; I see thou wilt perform according to thy promise in providing me such dishes as I think fit, whilst I live; and when I die, thou knowest that I have left thee all." To the *second* and *third* interrogations of the judge, the witness replied that these words were spoken in a Sunday on the afternoon, upon the deceased's wife providing such victuals for his dinner as he liked, and that he was then indifferent well in health, saving that sometime he was troubled with the pain of the gout, and that he was at that time very merry, and not in any passion or angry humour, neither at that time spoke anything against any of his children that this respondent heard. To the *fourth*, that she had heard the deceased declare his displeasure against his children, and particularly he had told her that a little before he was married

to Elizabeth Minshull, a former servant of his told Mary his daughter that she heard the deceased was to be married, to which the said Mary replied that that was no news to hear of his wedding, but if she could hear of his death that was something; and the deceased further told this respondent that his children did combine together and counsel his maid servant to cheat him in her marketings, and that his children had made away some of his books, and would have sold the rest of his books to the dunghill women; and in reply to the *eighth*, the witness deposes that Anne Milton is lame, but hath a trade and can live by the same, which is the making of gold and silver lace, and which the deceased bred her up to.

END OF VOL. I.





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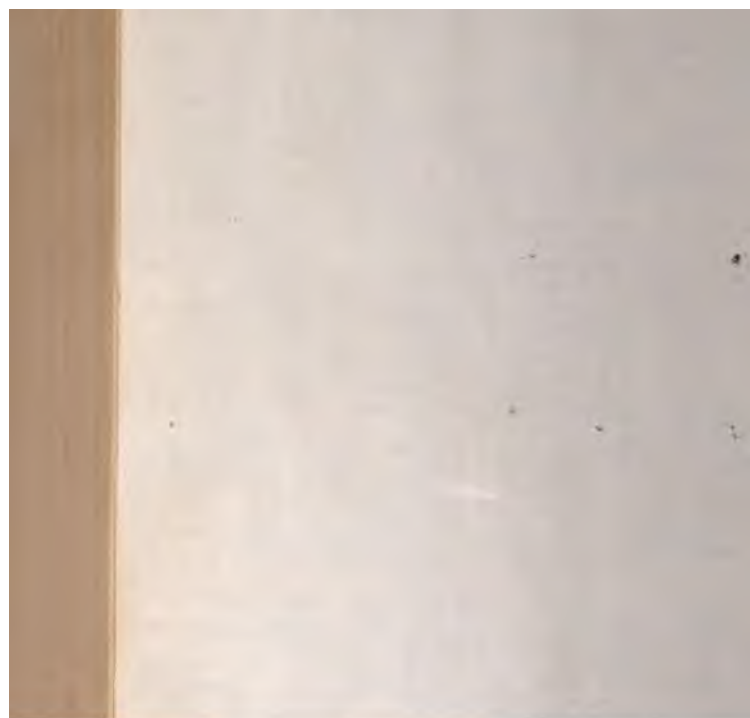
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